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THE ANIME & MANGA MAGAZINE

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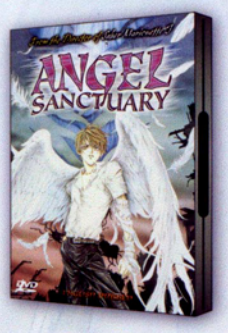


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Cover
Cover art courtesy of Manga Entertainment, Inc.
***Blood: The Last Vampire*** ©2000 Production I.G. / SVW • SCEI • IG PLUS • IPA.

Proofreading & Editing
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Color Separation & Linotronic
Typo Express, Inc.

Printing
Payette & Simms, Inc.

Special Thanks to
Jerry Chu (BEI), Jean-François Fortier (DP9), Danielle Garnier (Manga), Chad Kime (Pioneer), Michael Liu, Nikaku Animart, Pierre Ouellette (DP9), Mee-Lise Robinson (CPM), Ken Wiatrik (ADV), Vincent Wilson, Nobu Yamamoto (BEI)

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**PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS #67. August / September 2001. The Anime & Manga magazine. Published bimonthly by PROTOCULTURE Enr., P.O. Box 1433, Station B, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3B 3L2. FAX: (514) 527-0347. E-mail: editor@protoculture.qc.ca. Web: http://www.protoculture.qc.ca**

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Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

**La Vita e Bella, a la ARGENT SOMA (Life is Beautiful a la Argent Soma)**— Are you enjoying the TV broadcast of *The Big O* in North America? Then we here at Protoculture would like to introduce you to *Big O* director, and rising star, Kazuyoshi Katayama's new series *Argent Soma*. With a total of 26 episodes which ended in March 2001, this brand new anime gives a different atmosphere and storytelling technique than his previous works, waxing lyrical with human feelings springing from the words of Shakespeare. Certainly there has been no anime show of this nature before. The story starts as if it's about main character Takt Kaneshiro cum Soma's revenge, but as the story progresses it goes far beyond a simple premise, investigating many mysteries and secrets. All characters are suffering psychologically due to mishaps and tragedies in their past, such as losing loving parents, a lover, wife, etc. A bit like Roberto Benini's *Life is Beautiful* (more than in title alone) — many go through horrible events, but realize they are responsible for their own happiness. Life is beautiful when they try to live optimistically. Many shows seem to use revenge as motivation for fighting and characters see this as spiritual nourishment. In this show, however, Soma finds absolutely nothing in the end, only memories and regrets. What is the point of revenge anyway?

This show, as it progresses, tells us the importance of word usage. Soma find out that words are the key to human communication. It may sound really simple to all of us, but choosing and saying the right words isn't easy sometimes. He also finds out that there is no time to waste and no reason to close our hearts. In order to make life beautiful we must keep living no matter how hard things become. Outwardly, *Argent Soma* is science-fiction, but to me, through those wounded characters, it surely gives us the message that we cannot live without our painful past. All we need to do is to decide what makes us happy and to be ready to embrace everything that happens to us.

So, please enter the world of *Argent Soma*. You'll be amazed to find a show so rich in many deep emotions.

Miyako Matsuda

• • •

The summer was really busy. We did lots of moving around & clean up, gardening, watched lots of movies at Fantasia (I've seen about 30 movies and I am now watching some more at the Montreal World Film Festival), etc. Through all this (and the scorching heat!), we worked hard and did our best to minimalize any delays in the production. This was not a small task (and it is certainly not a small issue: 72 pages, nearly 50,000 words, over 350 illustrations, about fifty reviews and presenting ten anime titles!!!). Despite our effort, we were a little late on our schedule. But we were not the only ones to be busy: our printer was so busy that they could print the magazine only several weeks after we gave it to them! Now, it is really late, but I am sure you will appreciate it even more: it has never been so full of information! It only reflects the fact that, this summer, the anime industry has also been quite busy: I've never seen so many title acquisition annoucements! Our anime world is getting bigger and more complex every year. It only makes an otaku's life more beautiful!

This issue is offering a spotlight on the classic TV series *Gatchaman* (aka *Battle Of The Planets*, announced for release this fall from Rhino Home Video) as well as a short feature on *Blood: The Last Vampire* and an introduction to the original series of *Mobile Suit Gundam* (now airing on Cartoon Network). It also features "Anime World" articles (Conventions reports on SakuraKon, Anime Central, Animazement, Anime North & Fantasia, Anecdotes from *Utena*'s Director Kunihiko Ikuhara, artists Shimpei Itoh and Mio Odagi, an Interview with Fred Ladd and The Modern Japanese Music Database Part 11), an avalanche of short overviews on recent anime shows ("Anime Stories" on *Ai No Awa Awa Awaaa*, *Argento Soma, Gakko no Kaidan, Genso Maden Saiyuki, Gundress, Tri Zenon, and Vandread !*), the usual Reviews (of the latest Anime videos, Manga, Books, live-action movies and Model Kits), and the latest news! Enjoy!

**Next Issue**: the second part of our coverage on the classic TV series *Gatchaman,* along with several convention & festival reports (particularly on the FantAsia Film Festival and the Montreal World Film Festival), the usual "Anime World" articles, reviews, and latest news. But above all, this issue will offer tons of overviews on new anime titles to introduce you to Japanese animation of all styles (yaoi, boxing, car racing, drama, comedy, children, psychokinesic, etc.): *Descendants Of Darkness* (*Yami no Matsu-Ei*), *Gravitation*, *Final Fantasy*, *Hajime no Ippo*, *Initial D*, *Karakuri Kiden Hiou Senki*, *Magic Camp Guru Guru*, *Marco*, *Metropolis*, *Miami Guns*, *Millenium Actress*, *Ojamajo Doremi Sharp*, *Sci-fi Harry.* Another incredibly informative 72-page issue! Coming late October! Don't miss it! (And tell your friends about it!)…

Claude J. Pelletier

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**CD Japan Announced *e-Manga***. On August 1, CD Japan opened its brand new "e-Manga" page produced and presented in exclusive association with Kodansha Publishing, one of Japan's largest and best established publishers of Manga comics. The online monthly comic magazine, *e-Manga* is a new-style comic entertainment. The Mangas presented are partially animated, and some of them come with sound, all done principally through Shockwave. All Japanese texts are translated into English which are presented as subtitles. Each monthly issue contains 12 to 15 different Manga episodes, created by today's topnotch Manga authors and artists, and include e-Manga originals as well as acclaimed works already popular from hardcopy Manga magazines. For a fixed monthly fee, you can view an issue as many times as you wish for a month, and subscriptions are automatically renewed each month until you cancel it. To subscribe and browse through a free sample go to: http://www.cdjapan.co.jp/e-manga/. (Source: CD Japan)

***Cowboy BeBop The Movie: Knockin' on Heaven's Door***. This long waited theatrical movie comes to the public in August 2001 through Sony Pictures. "What is the borderline between dreams and reality?" Spike tried to seek the answer through the 26 episodes of the TV series and in the end he thought he had, by himself and by his own free will. Now Vincent is looking for the same answer. He has a grudge against Spike and challenges him. What reason does he have this hate? A mysterious butterfly appears as if everything is a midnight summer's dream. The film's keyword is "the butterfly" so don't take your eyes off it. With funky music by Yoko Kanno, fastened down with the band Seat Belts (the TV version's soundtrack CD became a big hit — selling over half a million copies so far), viewers can expect full satisfaction! Web: http://cowboy bebop.com. (c) Sunrise, Bons, Bandai Visual (Source: *NewType* 07-2001)

**Leiji Matsumoto's TV anime *Cosmo World* on the air in July**. This TV show started July 2001 through TV-Tokyo Midnight Sky Perfect TV-Anime Theatre X Ch. 729, and fans can enjoy Matsumoto's world with all those trademark characters such as Young Harlock, Tochiro, Lady Emeralads, Maetel, etc. Of course Matsumoto is writing the story and supervising the series directed by Kazuyoshi Yokota, with character designs by Keisuke Masunaga. Anime production is by Vega Entertainment. The story takes place at the end of the 30th century when humans are tired of wars against the Machine people who had suddenly invaded. With new beauties, Harlock appears to fight Warrior Zero. (Source: *NewType* 07-2001)

**Model News** — Here are some news about what will be coming out soon. The next 1/144 HGUC kit will be the MSA-0011 S-Gundam. It will go for ¥1,800 and come with a scale Core-Fighter, but will not be transformable. If so, a Xeku-Eins may be on the way. The people who have missed some of the first HGUC kits will be able to get them in the HGUC V-Operation set, which will contain the Guncannon, the Guntank and the recently released RX-78. The set will go for ¥2,600. The next Katoki Gundam Fix figure will be the 1/144 MSZ-010S "FAZZ". By the way, one of the next Bandai 1/100 MG kit will be the FAZZ. In the non-Gundam field, Takara has, at last, re-released their Starscream transformable toy from the Transformers, which will go for ¥2,980. Bandai has also re-released their St-Seiya kits, at ¥600 each. (Reported by Martin Ouellette).

***My Neighbours the Yamadas* adapted into a TV anime**. This manga by Hisaichi Ishi was first made into a theatrical release by Studio Ghibli and director Isao Takahata, and now a TV version, produced by Toei Animation, arrived on July 7th, 2001. This is the ten-year anniversary of *My Neighbours the Yamadas*' print run in *Asahi* newspaper. This anime is the first in Japan with no paper drawings, everything being animated solely on full-digital computer. Since '97 the newspaper strip has been re-titled *Nono-chan* to reflect Nono's elevated status as main character, hence the TV version is similarily named. Nono lives with her parents, her elder brother, grandmother and the dog. She's not so good at studying at school. The TV episodes are based on stories direct from the newspaper strip, faithful to Ishii's writing. It's on air Saturday mornings through TV Asahi. (Source: *NewType* 07-2001)

**New anime titles in production**: A two-part ("Earth Light" & "Moonlight Butterfly") *Turn A Gundam* movie is in production for a release next spring! Haruhiko Mikimoto is working on a *Macross* sequel to be released in conjunction with *Macross'* 20th anniversary! A new *Rurouni Kenshin* OVA, set to be released in December, is in production; titled *Seisou Hen* (Passing Of Time Saga), it will follow the first OVA and will conclude the series (and it has already been acquired by ADV Films). A new *Fushigi Yuugi* OVA series featuring the return of all seven Suzaku senshi, *Fushigi Yugi: Gaiden*, is under production and will be released as four 30-minute episode in spring (the rights have already been acquired by Pioneer). Production has been completed on *Armitage Dual Matrix*, the sequel to *Armitage III*, but, if no release date has been set yet, Pioneer has already announced it has acquired the rights. Apparently Gainax is going on with their projects of sequels to both *Gunbuster* OVA series (it would be directed by Kazuya Tsurumaki, with character designs by Yoshiyuki Sadamoto) and *Wings Of Honneamise* (titled Blue Uru). (Source: ANN)

***Sakura Wars*, the Movie**. *Sakura Wars 3: Is Paris Burning?* is a new instalment of the popular game, released in March, and its popularity has led to the production of a motion picture: *Sakura Wars the Movie.* Creator Oji Hiroi is very enthusiastic about this project and says he'll introduce new characters. Also from August 2001, *Sakura Wars* Theatrical Play begins its 5th year. (Source: *NewType* 07-2001)

***Spirited Away* Makes History At The Box Office With Over 10 Billion Yen Within Only 25 Days!** Director Hayao Miyazaki, now 61 years-old, is making Japanese movie history with his latest animated film, *Sen To Chihiro no Kamikakushi* (*Sen And Chihiro Spirited Away*) which grossed over 10 billion Yen (about $83 million US) and drew over 7.9 million Japanese to theatres all over Japan! Everything started quite well with *Spirited Away* already drawing a 20% larger audience than Miyazaki's previous movie (*Mononoke Hime* in 1997) on its opening day. It is the highest grossing Japanese movie of the year and is now set to break all Japanese box-office records. *Spirited Away* has already grossed more than *The South Pole Story* (1983, aka *Antartica*), *Mononoke Hime* (1997, box-office of ¥ 19.3 billion) and Toho Company is foreseeing that it will even beat the Japanese record of *Titanic* (¥ 25.9 billion)! However, despite such a success, it seems that Disney has no plan for a U.S. release… (Sources: *Sponichi Annex, Mainchi Shimbum, ANN*).

**Dangaioh Website**. AIC had opened an Official English Dangaioh Website: http://www.anime-int.com/e/animework/dangaioh/index.html. (Source: ANN).

**Gundam Ace** is a new magazine that started last June in Japan. Among other manga, it is publishing *Kidou Senshi Gundam: The Origin* by Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, who created lots of designs for *Gundam*, but never worked on a *Gundam* manga before (it will be a change from *Joan Of Arc* and *Jesus*!). (Source: Anihabara)

**Kia Asamiya** will apparently move to the United States (New York) in order to get more "creative freedom" and become more involved with the US comic industry. (Source: ANN)

**Studio Gainax brings two new TV anime shows in 2001**. From *Gunbuster*, *Nadia* and *Evangelion*, Studio Gainax has always brought out anime works that quickly transformed into classics in the industry. In 2001, Gainax is bringing not one but two new series to television: *Abenobashi Mahou Shoutengai* (*The Abeno Bridge Magic Shopping Mall)* and *Mahoromatique*. Fourteen years since *Wings of Honneamise*, director Hiryuki Yamaga is directing both shows. *The Abeno Bridge Magic Shopping Mall,* which should start on TV in spring 2002, is a comedy and adventure story about a boy Sasshi and a girl Arumi who are transported to different worlds. *Mahoromatique* is a romantic sci-fi comedy based on a manga published in *Comic Gum* and will air on BS-i in October. Yamaga-san is also writing the original story for a manga, *The Melody of Oblivion*, published in Monthly *Shounen Ace* Magazine. (Source: *NewType* 07-2001, ANN)

**Studio Gonzo's new anime**. Studio Gonzo (*Blue Submarine#6*, *Gatekeepers, Vandread*) (along with director Shinichii Tokairin (*Street Fighter*), popular character designer Keiji Gotoh (*Nadesico*, *Sorcerer Hunters*, *Those Who Hunt Elves*, *Gatekeepers*) and screenwriter Aya Matsui (*Dragonball*, *Marmalade Boy*)) is bringing the new series *Real Bout High School*. Based on the series of novels by Saiga Reiji and graphic novels by Sora Inoue (both published by Kadokawa), it's the story of a high school girl, Ryoko Mitsurugi (voiced by Ikue Kimura), who loves Kendo, a form of Japanese fencing and swordsmanship. She wants to be a master fencer. She also feels very romantic when she thinks of the past and in a way she's an otaku of Jidai-Geki costume play; in other words, she's a bit odd. Her high school is an odd school because they use a weird system, K-Fight, to solve student's disputes. When students have an argument on any matter they go to the gym to fight and resolve the dispute (don't argue, just fight and get over that darn dispute). Ryoko has been the champion of this K-Fight. Then suddenly, a monster appears along with a shrine maiden (miko) and this girl orders Ryoko to combat the monster. It premiered in Japan on July 30, but Pony Canyon has already licensed it to TokyoPop, which will released it under the title *Samurai Girl*! Stay tuned for this new anime with colourful characters! (Source: *NewType* 07-2001, TokyoPop press release)

**Sunrise's new anime TV show *Scride*.** Directed by Goro Taniguchi, with a screenplay by Yasuke Kuroda (the same crew responsible for *Infinite Ryvius*) this new show is based on the popular manga from weekly *Champion* Magazine. *Scride* will air from July on Wednesdays at 6:00pm through TV Tokyo. It's a story about a boy, Kazuma, who has to do everything possible to survive on "Lost Ground," a world of anarchy. (Source: *NewType* 07-2001)

News mostly reported by Miyako Matsuda (edited by Keith Dawe & Claude J. Pelletier). ANN = www.animenewsnetwork.com. AniHabara = http://east.sakura.ne.jp/aniba/aninews/japan/.

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| I'M GONNA BE AN ANGEL #1 (Eps 1-3) | SP | D/S | 75 | 19.95 ea | 07/10 |
| MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM #1: THE BATTLE BEGINS (Eps 1-5!) | B | D | 125 | 14.98 | 08/07 |
| DRAGONBALL Z MOVIE #4: LORD SLUG (uncut) | FN | D | 62 | 19.95 | 08/07 |
| TENCHI MUYO! #8 (Toonami) | P | D | 65 ea | 14.98 ea | 08/07 |
| DEMON BEAST INVASION #5 & 6 | A18 | D | 90 | 29.99 | 08/14 |
| NADIA: SECRET OF THE BLUE WATER #2: THE DARK KINGDOM | ADV | D | 100 | 19.98 | 08/14 |
| MAGIC USER'S CLUB (MAHO T SUKAI TAI) #3 (Eps #5 & 6) | AW | D/S | 60 ea | 19.95 ea | 08/14 |
| HAND MAID MAY #1: MAID TO ORDER | P | D | 100 | 24.98 | 08/14 |
| SAILOR MOON S #7 / #8 (Toonami/Uncut) | P | D/S | 60/70 ea | 14.98 ea | 08/14 |
| PATLABOR TV #1 | USM | D | 120 | 19.99 | 08/14 |
| DRAGONBALL: TOURNAMENT – FIGHTERS BEGINS | FN | D | 65 | 19.95 | 08/21 |
| FUSHIGI YUGI / MYSTERIOUS PLAY: SEIRYU BOX (Vol. 9-16) | P | D/S | 650 | 99.98 | 08/21 |
| RANMA 1/2 RR #4: THE DEMON FROM JUSENKYO | VV | D | 78 | 24.95 | 08/21 |
| RANMA 1/2 MM #11 / #12 | VV | S | 52 ea | 29.95 ea | 08/21 |
| MARTIAN SUCCESSOR NADESICO #12: RETURN TO THE RED PLANET | ADV | D/S | 60 | 19.98/29.95 | 08/28 |
| DRAGONBALL Z: BABIDI – #56: DESCENT / #57: BATTLE ROYALE | FN | D | 62 ea | 14.95 | 08/28 |
| BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE | ME | D/S | 48 | 19.95/24.95 | 08/28 |
| BATTLE OF THE PLANET #1-2 | RH | D | 60 ea | 9.95 | 08/28 |
| YAMAMOTO YOHKO STARSHIP GIRL #1 / #2 | RS | D | 60 ea | 19.98 ea | 08/28 |
| ST. TAIL: THIEF OF HEART #1 | TP | D | 75 | 19.99 | 08/28 |
| VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU TV #1: INITIATION | TP | D | 75 | 19.99 | 08/28 |
| ARC THE LAD #4: ALLIANCE | ADV | D | 125 | 19.98 | 09/04 |
| MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM - THE 08TH MS TEAM #2 | B | D | 75 | 19.98 | 09/04 |
| CERES, CELESTIAL LEGEND #2: PAST UNFOUND | VV | D | 75 | 24.98 | 09/04 |
| GETTER ROBO: ARMAGEDDON #2 – TRANSFIGURATION | ADV | D | 75 | 19.98 | 09/11 |
| ORPHEN #2: SUPERNATURAL POWERS | ADV | D | 75 | 19.98 | 09/11 |
| SAILOR MOON: #11 RETURN OF SAILOR MOON / #12 TREE OF DOOM | ADV | D | 90 ea | 12.98 ea | 09/11 |
| CARDCAPTOR SAKURA #5: VACATION DAZE | P | S | 100 | 24.98 | 09/11 |
| CARDCAPTORS #5: FIRESTORM (Edited) | P | D | 75 | 14.98 | 09/11 |
| PING PONG CLUB (THE) #4: LOSER'S CLUB (Eps 13-16) | SS | D | 100 | 19.99 | 09/11 |
| DETONATOR ORGUN | USM | D | 159 | 19.99 | 09/11 |
| GARAGA | USM | D | 100 | 19.99 | 09/11 |
| GUNDAM WING #16: FINAL SACRIFICE (Edited/Uncut) | B | D | 75 | 14.98 | 09/18 |
| GASARAKI #6: THE FIRES OF WAR | ADV | D | 75 | 19.98 | 09/25 |
| NADIA: SECRET OF THE BLUE WATER #3: ABOARD THE NAUTILUS | ADV | D | 100 | 19.98 | 09/25 |
| MAGIC USER'S CLUB TV #1 (Eps 1-4): I WANNA DO MORE | AW | S | 100 | 19.95 | 09/25 |
| PUPPET PRINCESS | AW | D | 40 | 19.95 | 09/25 |
| RUROUNI KENSHIN #11: FACES OF EVIL (Eps. 44-47) | AW | D/S | 100 | 24.95 ea | 09/25 |
| RUROUNI KENSHIN #12: BLIND JUSTICE (Eps. 48-51) | AW | D/S | 100 | 24.95 ea | 09/25 |
| SPACE TRAVELERS | AW | D | 60 | 19.95 | 09/25 |
| DRAGONBALL Z: BABIDI – #67: THE DARK PRINCE... / #68: RIVALS | FN | D | 60 ea | 14.95/19.95 | 09/25 |
| GATEKEEPERS #1: OPEN THE GATE | P | D | 75 | 24.98 | 09/25 |
| BOOGIEPOP PHANTOM #1: EVOLUTION | RS | D | 90 | 19.98 | 09/25 |
| YAMAMOTO YOHKO STARSHIP GIRL #3 | RS | D | 60 | 19.98 | 09/25 |
| YAMAMOTO YOHKO STARSHIP GIRL SERIES SET | RS | D | 180 | 39.95 | 09/25 |
| I'M GONNA BE AN ANGEL #2: INVISIBLE GIRL (Eps 4-6) | SP | D/S | 75 | 19.95 ea | 09/25 |
| CERES, CELESTIAL LEGEND #3: C-GENOME | VV | D | 75 | 24.95 | 09/25 |
| POKEMON(#45-46): JOHTO JOURNEYS #7 / #8 | VV | D | 70 ea | 14.98 ea | 09/25 |
| RANMA 1/2 RR #5: WACKY WINTER WONDERLAND | VV | D | 75 | 24.95 | 09/25 |
| MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM #2: THE RED COMET! / #3: THE THREAT OF ZEON | B | D | 125 ea | 14.98 ea | 10/02 |
| TEACHER'S PET #2: BODY & SOUL | A18 | D | 120 | 29.99 | 10/09 |
| NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD | CPM | D | 108 | 19.99 | 10/09 |
| DRAGONBALL Z: TRUNKS BOX SET (Edited/Uncut) | FN | D | 240 ea | 29.95/39.95 | 10/09 |
| HAND MAID MAY #2: PRODUCT RECALL | P | D | 75 | 24.98 | 10/09 |
| SAILOR MOON S #9 / #10 (Toonami/Uncut) | P | D/S | 60/70 ea | 14.98 ea | 10/09 |
| TENCHI MUYO! #9: ESCAPE TO SPACE (Toonami) | P | D | 65 ea | 14.98 ea | 10/09 |
| PING PONG CLUB (THE) #5: GOES FOR BROKE (Eps 17-19) | SS | D | 75 | 19.99 | 10/09 |
| ARC THE LAD #5: OATH OF VENGEANCE | ADV | D | 125 | 19.98 | 10/15 |
| BLUE GENDER #1 | FN | D | 75 | 19.95 | 10/16 |
| GETTER ROBO: ARMAGEDDON #3 – ASCENSION | ADV | D | 75 | 19.98 | 10/23 |
| DRAGONBALL: TOURNAMENT– SEMI-FINALS / THE FINAL TEST | FN | D | 62 ea | 19.95 | 10/23 |
| REVOLUTIONARY GIRL UTENA: THE MOVIE | SS | D | 87 | 19.99 | 10/23 |
| ST. TAIL: THIEF OF HEART #2 | TP | D | 75 | 19.99 | 10/23 |
| VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU TV #2 | TP | D | 75 | 19.99 | 10/23 |
| POWERSTONE: MYSTERY OF THE STONES | ADV | D | 100 | 19.98 | 10/30 |
| JEWEL HUNTER LIME BEM | AW | D | 90 | 19.95 | 10/30 |
| GOKUDO SWORDSMAN EXTRAORDINAIRE #1 (Eps 1-5) | AW | D | 125 | 24.95 | 10/30 |
| KNIGHT HUNTERS WEISS KREUZ #1: DEAD RINGER (Eps 1-5) | AW | D/S | 125 | 24.95 ea | 10/30 |
| RUROUNI KENSHIN #13: INNOCENCE & EXPERIENCE (Eps. 53-57) | AW | D/S | 125 | 24.95 ea | 10/30 |
| STAINLESS NIGHT #2 | KM | S | 30 | 24.95 | 10/30 |
| NEON GENESIS EVANGELION MOVIE / DEATH & REBIRTH | ME | D/S | 90 ea | 19.95 ea | 10/30 |
| MIFFY: MIFFY AT SCHOOL / TELL ME A STORY, MIFFY | P | D | 25 ea | 12.98 | 10/30 |
| BOOGIEPOP PHANTOM #2 | RS | D | 90 | 19.98 | 10/30 |
| CARDCAPTORS #6: BEST OF FRIENDS (Edited) | P | D | 75 | 14.98 | NOV |
| CARDCAPTOR SAKURA #6: FRIENDS & FAMILY | P | S | 100 | 24.98 | NOV |
| I'M GONNA BE AN ANGEL #3 | SP | D/S | 75 | 19.95 ea | NOV |
| PILOT CANDIDATE #1 | B | D | 75 | 14.98 | 11/06 |
| FORTUNE QUEST #1: JOURNEY TO MOUNT TERRASON (Eps 1-5) | AW | D | 125 | 24.95 | 11/13 |
| MAGIC USER'S CLUB #5 / TV #2 (Eps 5-7): MY SECRET WISH | AW | S | 75 | 19.95 | 11/13 |
| MEZZO FORTE (Edited/Uncut) | AW | D | 55/60 | 19.95/24.95 | 11/13 |
| ONI-TENSEI #1 | AW | D | 30 | 24.95 | 11/13 |
| RUROUNI KENSHIN #14: FIRE REQUIEM (Eps. 58-62) | AW | D/S | 125 | 24.95 ea | 11/13 |
| TOKYO PROJECT | AW | D | 50 | 19.95 | 11/13 |
| GATEKEEPERS #2: NEW FIGHTERS | P | D | 75 | 24.98 | 11/13 |
| PING PONG CLUB (THE) #6: ASSORTED SHORTS (Eps 20-23) | SS | D | 100 | 19.99 | 11/13 |
| LEGEND OF THE DRAGON KINGS #1: UNDER FIRE | USM | D | 94 | 19.99 | 11/13 |
| CERES, CELESTIAL LEGEND #4: RESOLVE | VV | D | 75 | 24.95 | 11/13 |
| MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM - THE 08TH MS TEAM #3 | B | D | 75 | 19.98 | 11/20 |
| ST. TAIL: THIEF OF HEART #3 | TP | D | 75 | 19.99 | DEC |

## FUTURE RELEASES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sep | Spriggan (Theatrical) | ADV |
| Nov | Metropolis (Theatrical) | Sony |
| Dec | Ah My Goddess Movie + Mini-Goddess | P |
| Dec | Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust | UV |
| Jan | Escaflowne Movie | B |
| Jan | FLCL (Furi Kuri) | IGV/SP |
| Jan | Vandread | P |
| Feb | Berserk | MB |
| Feb | Love Hina | B |
| Feb | Now and Then, Here And There | CPM |
| Mar | Jin-roh | B |
| Apr | Fancy Lala | B |
| Apr | Saber Marionette J To X | B |
| Spring | Kareshi Kanojo No Jijo (D/S) | RS |
| 2002 | Astroboy | ME |
| 2002 | Betterman | B |
| 2002 | Castle in the Sky [Laputa] | D |
| 2002 | Char's Counter Attack | B |
| 2002 | Colorful | ADV |
| 2002 | Dirty Pair Film & OVAs | ADV |
| 2002 | JoJo's Bizarre Adventure | SP |
| 2002 | Labyrinth Of Flame | CPM |
| 2002 | Maetel Legend OVAs | CPM |
| 2002 | Nadesico Movie: Prince Of Darkness | ADV |
| 2002 | Princess Nine | ADV |
| 2002 | Slayers OVAs #2-3 & Movies #2-3 | ADV |
| 2002 | Soul Taker | P |
| 2002 | Steel Angel Kurumi | ADV |
| 2002 | Virus | ME |
| 2002 | Z-Mind | B |
| 2002 | Zone Of the Enders OVA + TV | ADV |
| UNKN | Ai Mai Mi! Strawberry Egg | P |
| UNKN | Armitage III: Dual Matrix | P |
| UNKN | Aura Battler Dunbine (!!!) | ADV |
| UNKN | Barry Party | STA |
| UNKN | Burn Up Xcess (TV) | ADV |
| UNKN | Chance Triangle Session | ADV |
| UNKN | Chivass | ADV |
| UNKN | Cutey Honey (new TV series) | ADV |
| UNKN | Dai Guard | ADV |
| UNKN | Dangaizer 3 | RS |
| UNKN | Dark Millenium | ADV |
| UNKN | Devadasy | MB |
| UNKN | Devilman Lady | ADV |
| UNKN | Dragonball GT | FN |
| UNKN | Eden's Bowy | ADV |
| UNKN | Ellcia Theatrical | ADV |
| UNKN | Excel Saga | ADV |
| UNKN | Flare Next | USM |
| UNKN | Fushigi Yugi Gaiden OVA | P |
| UNKN | Ghost Sweeper | ME |
| UNKN | Giant Gorg | B |
| UNKN | Goemon | ADV |
| UNKN | Inu Yasha | VV |
| UNKN | Kazemakase Tsukikage Ran | B |
| UNKN | Kikaidar | B |
| UNKN | Kinnikuman: The Ultimate Muscle! | 4KIDS |
| UNKN | Kiteorama | AW |
| UNKN | KO Beast Century | RS |
| UNKN | Kurogane Communication | MB |
| UNKN | Let's Dance With Papa | ADV |
| UNKN | Level C | MB |
| UNKN | Lupin III (10 most recent movies) | FN |

**Continues on page 10**

## LEGEND:

A18: Anime 18 (CPM); ADV: A.D. Vision; AE: AnimEigo; APC: Asia Pulp Cinema; AW: AnimeWorks (MB); B: Bandai (AnimeVillage); CM: Critical Mass (RS); CPM: Central Park Media; D: Disney (BV); FN: Funimation; KM: Kitty Media (MB); KP: Kaiju Productions (MB); KR: Kid Rhino; MB: Media Blasters; ME: Manga Ent.; P: Pioneer; RS: The Right Stuff; SCP: SoftCel Pictures (ADV); SP: Synch-Point; SS: Software Scuptors (CPM); TP: Tokyo Pop; TS: Tokyo Shock (MB); USM: U.S. Manga Corps (CPM); UV: Urban Vision; VV: Viz Video; WB: Warner Brothers; S: Subtitled; D: Dubbed; E: English; B: Bilingual; M: Multilingual. The last three columns are the duration (in minutes), the price (in $US), and the release date (street).

Kinyo Bradley Bardell (Order: 53033483)

## MANGA SELECTION

**Corrector Yui #1**. Yui is a normal 14 year-old girl living in a future where computers are everywhere and control everything. Then one day she discovers a friendly program in her computer called I.R., who tells her she must become "Corrector Yui" and collect eight parts of a software program called "The Corrector" in order to defeat Grosser, an evil virus bent on destroying cyberspace and earth. Now Yui must become a super-heroine and save two worlds! Tokyopop Press, created by Kia Asamiya, Written & Illustrated by Keiko Okamoto, b&w, 48 pg, $2.95, avail. in September.

**Kabuto Vol. 1**. 500 years ago, in the Tensho Era of Japan, a man was born who defied the will of a demon; a man who had the gods of good on his side; a man destined to battle evil… his name was Kabuto. Somehow, Kuroyasha Douki, the vile Black Night Demon, escaped his prison in hell and returned to the earthly plane to wreak vengeance on the family-line of Kabuto. None can escape his deadly magic and masterful skills with the blade; however, the gods of the North, West, East and South band together to help Kabuto stand for justice. With the questionable help of a diabolical talking sword that his own father forged, Kabuto may live another day to see his own sons born… ComicsOne.com, by Buichi Terasawa, SC, 320pg, b&w, $11.95, avail. in September.

**Seraphic Feather GN**. In the not-too-distant future, an intact alien starship has been discovered buried beneath the moon's surface, a vessel with awesome technology somehow connected to three powerful "Emblem Seeds" found on Earth. Sunao Oumi, a young man stuck on the moon and trying to work up the funds to return to Earth, takes an assignment to escort two visiting U.N. investigators and is drawn into a web of violence and intrigue as dark operatives try to purloin the Emblem Seeds the investigators have brought with them. But the investigators are more than they seem: Attim M-Zak, a beautiful and mysterious woman with deadly augmented abilities, and Kei, a starry-eyed dreamboat from Sunao's past... whose death brought Sunao to the moon in the first place! Dark Horse, by Hiroyuki Utatane and Yo Morimoto, translated by Studio Proteus, SC, 232pg, b&w, $16.95, avail. on 11-28-01.

**The Slayers: Super-Explosive Demon Story #1**. The hat-headed, redhaired sorceress Lina Inverse, and the strong and bull-headed adventurer, Goury Gabriev star in one of the funniest Medieval fantasy series ever created, with dashing heroes, evil demons, princesses in danger, and wild jokes that everyone will love! And this is where it all began! Lina meets Goury for the very first time! It's the beginning of their fabulous adventures, and all the business that the fans have come to love is at its best here. These lovable heroes are always led astray by their hunger — for lots and lots of food, and for get-rich-quick schemes that never seem to work out! CPM Manga, by Hajime Kanzaka & Shoko Yoshinaka, b&w, 32pg, $2.95, avail. in October.

**Uzumaki Vol. 1 GN**. It all started one overcast day in the town of Kurôzu-cho. When the father of Kirie's boyfriend, Shuichi Saito, became obsessed with spirals, Kirie thought it was just an eccentric curiosity. But weeks later, when Mr Saito is found inside a circular tub twisted into an impossible spiral shape, both Kirie and Shuichi begin to realize the gravity of their situation. Soon, with the spiral phenomenon spreading and the body count rising, Kirie and Shuichi must fight its growing number of followers or die trying! Collect the stories from *Pulp* Vol 5 #2-7. Viz Comics, by Junji Ito, For Mature Readers, SC, 208pg, b&w, $ 15.95, avail. in October.

### LEGEND:

AP: Antarctic Press; C1: ComicsOne; CPM: Central Park Media Manga; DH: Dark Horse; EM: Eros MangaErotica (Studio Proteus/ Fantagraphics); FB: Fanboy Comics; IC: Ironcat; IM: Image; M18: Manga 18 (CPM); RX: Radio Comix; SF: Sexy Fruit (IC); TP: Tokyopop.com (Mixx). GN: Graphic Novel. Prices are given in $US. * Adult titles. Sources: *Previews* and publishers' press releases.

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3x3 EYES : FLIGHT OF THE DEMON [208pg] | GN | DH | 16.95 | Nov 7 |
| ANIME ART GALLERY : THE ART OF CERES CELESTIAL LEGEND | BK | VIZ | 24.95 | Oct |
| ANIME ENCYCLOPEDIA [592pg] | BK | SB | 24.95 | Oct |
| ANIMERICA EXTRA VOL. 4 [manga anthology] | 10-11 | VIZ | 4.95 | Sep/Oct |
| ANIMERICA VOL. 9 [magazine] | 9-10 | VIZ | 4.95 | Sep/Oct |
| ASTRA | 3-4 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| BAKUNE YOUNG VOL. 2 [256pg] | GN | VIZ | 16.95 | Oct |
| BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL (#60-61): SECRETS | 3-4 (/4) | DH | 2.99 | Sep 12/Oct 10 |
| CARDCAPTOR SAKURA | 20-21 | TP | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| CERES CELESTIAL LEGEND | 4-5 (/6) | VIZ | 3.25 | Sep/Oct |
| CLOVER VOL. 2 | GN | TP | 14.95 | Sep |
| CORRECTOR YUI | 1-2 | TP | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| DARK ANGEL [Kia Asamiya] | 29-30 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| DEMON BEAST INVASION THE MANGA | 1-2 | M18 | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| DER MOND : THE ART OF YOSHIYUKI SADAMOTO | BK | VIZ | 29.95 | Sep |
| DRAGON KNIGHT | 1 | TP | 2.95 | Oct |
| DRAGONBALL (BOOK 4) | 2-3 (/10) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| DRAGONBALL VOL. 6 | GN | VIZ | 12.95 | Sep |
| DRAGONBALL Z (BOOK 4) | 10-11 (/15) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| DRAGONBALL Z VOL. 6 | GN | VIZ | 12.95 | Oct |
| EAGLE: MAKING OF AN ASIAN-AMERICAN PRESIDENT | 20-21 | VIZ | 6.95 | Sep/Oct |
| EL HAZARD: THE MAGNIFICENT WORLD PART 3 | 3-4 (/5) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| FUSHIGI YUGI VOL. 5 | GN | VIZ | 15.95 | Sep |
| FUTABA-KUN CHANGE! Vol. 5 | GN | IC | 15.95 | Oct |
| FUTABA-KUN CHANGE! Vol. 7 | 2-3 | IC | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| GALAXY EXPRESS 999 VOL. 4 | GN | VIZ | 16.95 | Oct |
| GEOBREEDERS | 31-32 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| G-FAN | 53 | | 4.95 | Sep |
| GOKU : MIDNIGHT EYE [Buichi Terasawa, 294pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 11.95 | Sep/Oct |
| GUNDAM WING: EPISODE ZERO | 6-7 (/8) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| GUNDAM : BATTLEFIELD OF PACIFIST | 1 | TP | 2.95 | Oct |
| GUNSMITH CATS: MISTER V [224pg] | GN | DH | 18.95 | Oct 10 |
| GUNSMITH CATS: SPECIAL | 1 (/1) | DH | 2.99 | Oct 17 |
| HARLEM BEAT VOL. 8 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Sep |
| INU-YASHA: A FEUDAL FAIRY TALE PART 6 | 5-6 (/15) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| ISLAND | 2-3 | TP | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| JOAN [Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, color, 192pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 14.95 | Sep/Oct |
| KABUTO [Buichi Terasawa, 320/298pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 11.95 | Sep/Oct |
| KAZAN [Gaku Miyao, 188pg] | 5 | C1 | 9.95 | Sep |
| LA BLUE GIRL : THE MANGA | 2-3 | M18 | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| LODOSS WAR: CHRONICLES OF THE HEROIC KNIGHT | 13-14 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| LODOSS WAR: CHRONICLES OF THE HEROIC KNIGHT | GN | CPM | 15.95 | Sep |
| LODOSS WAR: DEEDLIT'S TALE | 2-3 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| LONE WOLF AND CUB VOL. 14-15 [320/352 pg] | GN | DH | 9.95 | Oct 31/Nov 28 |
| MAGICAL POKÉMON JOURNEY PART 5 | 3-4 (/4) | VIZ | 4.95 | Sep/Oct |
| MAXION VOL. 2 [176pg] | GN | CPM | 15.95 | Oct |
| MAXION | 22-23 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| MIRACLE GIRLS VOL. 3 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Oct |
| MIRACLE GIRLS | 12-13 | TP | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| NEON GENESIS EVANGELION BOOK 6 | 3-4 (/4) | VIZ | 3.50 | Sep/Oct |
| NEON GENESIS EVANGELION VOL. 5 | GN | VIZ | 15.95 | Sep |
| NO NEED FOR TENCHI PART 12 | 2-3 (/6) | VIZ | 3.50 | Sep/Oct |
| NO NEED FOR TENCHI VOL. 10 : MOTHER PLANET | GN | VIZ | 15.95 | Sep |
| OFFERED [K. Koike & R. Ikegami, 400/398pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 14.95 | Sep/Oct |
| OGENKI CLINIC VOL. 8 * | 2-3 | SF | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| OH MY GODDESS! THE FOURTH GODDESS | GN | DH | 18.95 | Oct 17 |
| OH MY GODDESS! XI #2: BANPEI IN LOVE | 2 (/2) | DH | 3.50 | Sep 5 |
| OH MY GODDESS! XI #3: MYSTERY CHILD | 1 (/8) | DH | 2.99 | Oct 3 |
| POKEMON ADVENTURES PART 5 | 3-4 (/4) | VIZ | 4.95 | Sep/Oct |
| PRINCESS PRINCE [Tomoko Taniguchi] | 12-13 | CPM | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS [magazine] | 68 | | 4.95 | Oct |
| PULP VOL. 5 [manga anthology] | 10-11 | VIZ | 5.95 | Sep/Oct |
| RANMA 1/2 PART 10 | 6-7 (/11) | VIZ | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| RANMA 1/2 VOL. 18 | GN | VIZ | 15.95 | Oct |
| REDMOON [Mina Hwang, 196pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 11.95 | Sep/Oct |
| SAILOR MOON STARS VOL. 3 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Oct |
| SAILOR MOON VOL. 11 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Oct |
| SAILOR MOON | 35 | TP | 2.95 | Sep |
| SAINT TAIL VOL. 2 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Sep |
| SAINT TAIL | 11-12 | TP | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| SARAI [Masahiro Shibata, 204/186pg] | 3-4 | C1 | 9.95 | Sep/Oct |
| SERAPHIC FEATHER [232pg] | GN | DH | 16.95 | Nov 28 |
| SILENT MOBIUS: ADVENT | 3-4 (/6) | VIZ | 3.25 | Sep/Oct |
| SMILE VOL. 3 [shojo manga anthology] | 10-11 | TP | 4.99 | Sep/Oct |
| SORCERER HUNTERS VOL. 6 | GN | TP | 9.95 | Oct |
| SUPER MANGA BLAST! [manga anthology, 128pg] | 16-17 | DH | 5.99 | Sep 26/Oct 31 |
| THE SLAYERS : SUPER-EXPLOSIVE DEMON STORY | 1 | CPM | 2.95 | Oct |
| UROTSUKIDOJI : RETURN OF THE CHOJIN | 3-5 | M18 | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| UZUMAKI VOL. 1 | GN | VIZ | 15.95 | Oct |
| VAMPIRE DAHLIA (THE) | 5-6 (/6) | IC | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| VAMPIRE PRINCESS YUI VOL. 3 | 2-3 | IC | 2.95 | Sep/Oct |
| WOUNDED MAN [K. Koike & R. Ikegami, 400pg] | 1-2 | C1 | 14.95 | Sep/Oct |

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

# ANIME RELEASES (DVD)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VOTOMS #14-16 | NT | B | 100 ea | 29.95 | ??? |
| SHERLOCK HOUND | P | B | | 29.98 | DELAY |
| ROBOTECH: MACROSS SAGA #3 | ADV | D | 150 | 14.98 | 08/07 |
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| Lord Of Lords Ryu Knight Memorial Box Part 2 | BCBA-878 | 31,290 | 09-25 |
| Macross 7 Vol. 7 | BCBA-741 | 5,040 | 09-25 |
| Mahou Senshi Riui Vol. 2 | BBBA-1822 | 6,090 | 09-25 |
| Mazinkaizer #1 | BCBA-868 | 2,940 | 09-25 |
| Meitantei Conan (Detective Conan): Part 7 Vol. 5 | BMBD-2012 | 4,410 | 09-25 |
| Mobile Suit Z Gundam: Memorial Box Part-III (Vol. 10-13) | ST-357 | 25,200 | 09-25 |
| Sabu to Ichi Torimono Hikae Vol. 12 | BIBA-1742 | 3,990 | 09-25 |
| Sabu to Ichi Torimono Hikae Vol. 13 | BIBA-1743 | 3,990 | 09-25 |
| Salary man Kintaro #3 | BCBA-885 | 5,040 | 09-25 |
| Shamanic Princess Vol. 2 | BCBA-882 | 6,300 | 09-25 |
| Super Gals! Ran Kotobuki Vol. 2 | BCBA-956 | 5,250 | 09-25 |
| The Adventure of Tom Sawyer | BCBA-753 | 2,940 | 09-25 |
| The Super Dimension Fortress Macross: TV Series Vol.4 | BCBA-795 | 5,040 | 09-25 |
| You're Under Arrest: Second Season #3 | BCBA-923 | 6,300 | 09-25 |
| pokemon: Kingin-hen: Season 1 Vol. 4 | ZMBP-383 | 3,990 | 09-26 |
| Great Dangaio #3 | AVBA-14203 | 5,040 | 09-27 |
| Inu Yasha Vol. 5 | AVBA-14212 | 6,090 | 09-27 |
| Kidou Tenshi Angelic Layer Battle 3 | AVBA-14207 | 6,090 | 09-27 |
| JoJo's Bizarre Adventure #6 | KWBA-6 | 7,140 | 09-28 |
| Spaceship Sagittarius TV Series DVD Box 2 | MABT-9004 | 30,450 | 09-28 |
| Astroboy (Atom) DVD-Box #1 | XT-127 | 29,610 | 09-29 |
| Hellsing | PIBA-1219 | 3,675 | 10-03 |
| Final Fantasy 10: DVD Single | SSBX-2020 | 1,980 | 10-11 |
| Zoids Vol. 12 | AVBA-14215 | 6,090 | 10-11 |
| Chance Triangle Session: Session Three | AVBA-14226 | 5,040 | 10-17 |
| Panda kopanda & Panda Kopanda: Amefuri Circus | VWDZ-8034 | 3,990 | 10-17 |
| One Piece Theatrical [Nejimaki to no daiboken] | DSTD-2019 | 4,725 | 10-22 |
| Great Dangaio Vol. 4 | AVBA-14219 | 5,040 | 10-24 |
| KO Century Beasts II | SVWB-7085 | 4,725 | 10-24 |
| One Piece Piece.10 | AVBA-14221 | 5,040 | 10-24 |
| Parappa The Rapper: TV Animation Stage. 1 | SVWB-1531 | 5,040 | 10-24 |
| Parappa The Rapper: TV Animation Stage. 2 | SVWB-1532 | 5,040 | 10-24 |
| Akira: DVD Special Edition | BCBA-1025 | 10,290 | 10-25 |
| Project Arms Special Edit Version Vol. 4 | SDV-2615D | 6,300 | 10-25 |
| Digimon Adventure 02 Vol. 10 | DSTD-6030 | 6,090 | 10-27 |
| Shoubushi Densetsu - Tetsuya Vol. 6 | DSTD-6066 | 5,775 | 10-29 |
| Fushigi no Umi no Nadia DVD-Box | KIBA-9609 | 60,900 | 10-30 |
| Inu Yasha Vol. 6 | AVBA-14229 | 6,090 | 10-31 |
| Kidou Tenshi Angelic Layer Battle 4 | AVBA-14222 | 6,090 | 10-31 |
| Zoids Shin Seiki / Zero 1 | AVBA-14218 | 5,040 | 10-31 |
| Rurouni Kenshin: Meiji Kenkaku Romantan: DVD-Box Vol. 2 Kyoto-hen | SVZB-1359 | 51,975 | 11-07 |

**Japanese DVD Releases**: This list is not exhaustive. The DVD listed are in Japanese language only and for Zone 2. It shows: title, catalog number, price (¥) and release date. Sources: www.cdjapan.co.jp.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

## • FUTURE ANIME DVD •

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| JAN | SABER MARIONETTE J AGAIN | B |
| UNKN | ANGEL'S EGG | AB |
| UNKN | CITY HUNTER 2 (2 5-DVD Sets, $124.98) | ADV |
| UNKN | BUBBLEGUM CRASH | AE |
| UNKN | OTAKU NO VIDEO | AE |
| UNKN | YOU'RE UNDER ARREST (TV) | AE |
| UNKN | URUSEI YATSURA (MOVIES & OVAS) | AE |
| UNKN | KIKI DELIVERY SERVICE | BV |
| UNKN | [LAPUTA] A CASTLE IN THE SKY | BV |
| UNKN | METAL FIGHTER MIKU | MB |
| UNKN | BOUNTY DOG | ME |
| UNKN | DARK MYTH | ME |
| UNKN | GIANT ROBO 1-2 | ME |
| UNKN | GUNBUSTER | ME |
| UNKN | ORGUS 02 | ME |
| UNKN | PSYCHIC WARS | ME |
| UNKN | TOKYO REVELATION | ME |
| UNKN | VAMPIRE WARS | ME |
| UNKN | VIOLENCE JACK | ME |

## • FUTURE NEW RELEASES •

**Continues from page 6**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| UNKN | Madonna | AW |
| UNKN | Melty Lancer | ADV |
| UNKN | Metal Fighter Miku | MB |
| UNKN | Neo Ranga | ADV |
| UNKN | Ninja Resurrection TV | ADV |
| UNKN | Puni Puni Poemi | ADV |
| UNKN | Rune Soldier (Mahou Senshi Riui) | ADV |
| UNKN | Rurouni Kenshin (new OVA) | ADV |
| UNKN | Sakura Wars 2 OVA + TV | ADV |
| UNKN | Saiyuki | ADV |
| UNKN | Samurai (The) | ADV |
| UNKN | Samurai Girl: Real Bout High School | TP |
| UNKN | Senkaiden Houshin Engi (Soul Hunters) | ADV |
| UNKN | Sci-Fi Harry | STA |
| UNKN | Spectral Force | ADV |
| UNKN | SPT Layzner | B |
| UNKN | Super Milk-chan | ADV |
| UNKN | Ultima Series | ADV |
| UNKN | Urotsukidoji | ADV |
| UNKN | Wild Arms | ADV |
| UNKN | Wonderful | ADV |
| UNKN | Y's 1 & 2 | MB |
| UNKN | You're Under Arrest (Movie) (VHS/DVD) | ADV |
| UNKN | Yuki Terai | ADV |
| UNKN | YuYu Hakusho (TV) | FN |

## • CD SOUNDTRACK •

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 08/21 | Trigun OST (14.98) | TP |
| 08/21 | Bubblegum Crisis Tokyo 2040 OST (14.98) | TP |
| 08/21 | Vampire Princess Miyu OST (14.98) | TP |

## • LIVE-ACTION •

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| July 31 | New Big Boss (D) | TS |
| July 31 | Women in Fury (D) | TS |
| Aug 14 | Parasyte Eve (S, 120 min., VHS: 14.98/DVD: 19.98) | ADV |
| Aug 14 | Terminatrix (D, 70 min, 29.99) | APC |
| Aug 14 | The Hypnotist (S, 110 min., VHS: 14.98/DVD: 19.98) | ADV |
| Sep 4 | Farscape: Till The Blood Runs Clear/Rhapsody in Blue | ADV |
| Sep 25 | J-Idols: Yuka / Kyoko Fukada / Race Queens (19.99) | TP |
| Oct 9 | Beautiful Beast DVD (B, 86 min., 29.99) | APC |
| Oct 23 | Kei Mizutani DVD Coll. (B, 443 min., 99.99) | APC |
| Oct 23 | Sumo Vixens DVD (B, 73 min., 11.99) | APC |
| OCT | Score (29.95, 90 min.) | TS |
| OCT | Silk & Steel (14.98, 90 min.) | ADV |
| Nov 13 | The Ladies' Phone Club DVD (B, 88 min., 19.99) | APC |
| Nov 13 | Tokyo Decameron DVD (B, 88 min., 19.99) | APC |
| Nov 13 | Black Angel | TS |
| Nov 13 | Jungle Holocaust | TS |
| Nov 13 | Scorpion Adventure 1 & 2 | TS |
| Nov 16 | J-Idols: Nanae / Fumika / Race Queens UpClose | TP |
| 2001 | Lone Wolf & Cub (DVD) | AE |

# NORTH AMERICA

**BIG APPLE ANIME FEST**. The annual Big Apple Anime Fest (BAAF) is a festival supported by a consortium of companies involved in the anime and manga industry, and is open to all participants — both from the industry and the public. BAAF consists of an entire weekend of films, anime and manga, with live events, creator panels, business meetings, academic symposia, fan contests and lots of vendors. The goal is to promote Anime and Manga Culture to the general population, and to provide a lot of fun to those who already enjoy it! This year it will be held on the Halloween Weekend (October 26-28) at the Directors Guild Of America Theater, Japan Society and The Park Central Hotel in New York. Screening will include: *Metropolis*, *Spriggan*, *Utena The Movie*, *Blood*, *X*, *Escaflowne The Movie*, *Love Hina*, *Pilot Candidate*, *Blue Gender*, *Ceres Celestial Legend*, *Boogiepop Phantom*, *Now And There Here And There*, *I'm Gonna Be An Angel* and more. Guests will include: Rin Taro, Katsuhiro Otomo, Kunihiko Ikuhara, Koichi Ohata, Rusher Ikeda, Toshio Maeda, Tim Eldred, Yuji Moriyama, many voice actors and scholars. The symposium will focus on "The Reception of Japanese Popular Culture in the USA." For tickets & hotels information, please consult the BAAF web page: www.bigappleanimefest.com.

**Industry News**. There are so many new anime titles announced this summer that it is impossible to talk about them all. Check the "Future Releases" chart for the detailed list, but here are the highlights: **ADV Film** announced *Aura Battler Dunbine*, *Eden's Bowy*, *Rurouni Kenshin* new OVAs, *Saiyuki*, *Zone Of The Enders* (ZOE); **Bandai** announced *Kazemakase Tsukikage Ran* and *SPT Layzner*; **FUNimation** announced *Dragonball GT* and the last ten movies (TV Specials) of *Lupin III* (!); **Media Blasters** announced *Space Travelers* and *Weiss Kreuz*; **Pioneer** announced *Ah My Goddess* (plus *Mini Goddess*), *Fushigi Yugi Gaiden*, *Gatekeepers*, and *Vandread*; **Right Stuf** announced *Dangaizer 3*; **Synch-Point** announced *Jojo's Bizarre Aventur;* **Tokyopop** announced *Real Bout High School* and **Viz** announced *Inu Yasha*!!!

**Manga News**. On the manga scene, Dark Horse announced the acquisition of Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy* (to be published in a similar format than Lone Wolf & Cub, 23 volumes, $9.95 ea) and Kenichi Sonoda's Exaxxion (to start in November). Tokyopop announced the acquisition of *Marmalade Boy*, *Kodocha*, *Corrector Yui*, *Dragon Knights*, *Gundam Wing Battlefield of Pacifists*, *Island* and *The Skull Man*. New titles like *Mars*, *Paradise Kiss*, *Planet Ladder*, *Kare Kano* (He says/She Says) and *Ragnarok: Into The Abyss* will also be published in *Smile*.

**The Mad Capsule Markets**. Palm & Manga announced that the first 10,000 copies of *BLOOD: The Last Vampire* sold will feature a free 3" DVD of The Mad Capsule Markets' video for "Pulse" as well as some other cool goodies. Palm recording artists The Mad Capsule Markets will release their first U.S. album, OSC-DIS, on September 18, 2001. Known for their innovative videos, packaging, and elaborate stage shows, The Mad Capsule Markets' aggressive hybrid of punk / metal / electronic music has put them at the forefront of the Japanese music scene. Whether they're dressed in *Star Wars* storm trooper-like space garb or chasing the evil empire to save the child in the "Pulse" video, The Mad Capsule Markets have cornered the multimedia market. Also, on October 30, 2001 Palm will release the OSC-DIS Video DVD. It features 5 videos from the album including, "Tribe," "Pulse," "All The Time In Sunny Beach," "Good Girl," "Midi Surf" as well as a bonus video "Systematic" from the album *Digidogheadlock*, links to the Palm and The Mad Capsule Markets websites, a photo gallery, and a trailer from the 3" DVD.

**Two New Anime Magazines**: One, *ANIME INVASION* (88 pgs, full color, $4.99/$6.95 Can) produced by the publisher of *Wizard*, had a first issue released in July — but the second issue won't come before November. The second magazine, announced for next spring, is nothing less than the English version of *NEWTYPE*! Published by Digital Manga, the 150-page magazine will be released monthly and should offer 70% of Japanese news, 20% of US information and 10% of European content. (Source: ANN)

## TOP FIVE ANIME

Recently, a local newspaper asked me to establish a list of the five best anime. This is not an easy task. On the hundreds of anime produced each year, many are excellent for various reasons (story, quality of animation, music, etc.). A Top 50 would probably give more justice to Japanese animation. However, I did select five titles that I thought were the most outstanding:

1) ***Escaflowne: A Girl In Gaia***. I consider that *Escaflowne* is much better than *Evangelion*, but *Eva*, getting an earlier release, got all the attention of the fans. I include here the *Escaflowne* movie in first position because it is a recent animation, which improved several aspects of the TV series. A beautiful fantasy story. 2) ***Nausicaä***. I would be tempted to list here the entire works of MIYAZAKI Hayao, but *Nausicaä* is my favorite among all. An intelligent story with an ecological theme. 3) ***Akira*** was for a long time at the top of my personal chart, but has been surpassed since then. I include it here because its great technical quality and the originality (then) of its apocalyptic story made it one of the turning point of anime history, in Japan as well as in North America. Like the French slogan was saying: "It's violent, but it's beautiful!" 4) ***Robotech*** / ***Macross***. This superb mecha story is at the origin of my anime epiphany. It made me then rediscover Japanese animation and realized that most of the shows I watched when I was a kid were japanimation (*Leo The Lion*, *Marine Boy*, *Prince Saphir*, *Demetan*, etc.). 5) ***Kimagure Orange Road***. This is the TV series that captivated me to most, to the point we thought it was addictive. A funny soap opera that blend sci-fi and teenagers' preoccupations.

Of course, I don't always agree myself with this top 5 and I wonder, beyond those titles, where to classify the *Bubblegum Crisis*, *Megazone 23 part II*, *Cowboy Bebop*, *Ghost In The Shell*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, *Patlabor*, *Cagliostro Castle*, *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Record Of Lodoss War*, *Giant Robo*, *Big O*, *Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Gatchaman*, *Golden Boy*, *Gunbuster*, *Noir*, etc. ? Quite difficult...

**And you: which five anime would you consider beeing the best? Let us know either by mail (Top Five Anime, c/o Protoculture, PO Box 1433, Station B, Montreal, Qc., Canada, H3B 3L2) or e-mail (top5anime@protoculture.qc.ca) and you might win some prizes! [CJP]**

News mostly reported by Claude J. Pelletier. ANN = www.animenewsnetwork.com.

Kirsty Bradley Bardell (Order: 53033488)

## ANGEL LINKS VOL. 4: ETERNAL ANGEL

Bandai, Cat.# 0988, Bilingual DVD, 75 min., $29.98, avail. on 10-02-01. Meifon's true destiny is upon the crew of the Angel Links. But in an attempt to escape from her pain, she disbands the Angel Links and the Links Group and relocates to a small village on a remote planet. But she cannot escape her past, as Meifon is forced into a final confrontation with the evil pirate Goryu, where only one of them will survive!

## ARC THE LAD VOLUME 5: OATH OF VENGEANCE

A.D. Vision, Cat.# AR-005, VHS Dubbed (Bilingual DVD), 125 min., $19.98 ($29.98), avail on 10-15-01. The defeat of Galuano was only the beginning of the battle. As Arc leads the Smerian forces against Andel's army, the sinister Clive masterminds a different assault on an unexpected target. As Shu battles Toshu and the barrier protecting the shrine is destroyed, a powerless Elk must face both his worst fears and his greatest challenge.

## BIG O VOL. 3

Bandai, Bilingual DVD, 75 min., $24.98, avail. on 10-16-01. Life gets more and more interesting everyday for Paradigm City's top negotiator. But when Dorothy finds a stray cat and brings it home, an older couple shows up claiming to be the parents of the cat! The cat isn't really a cat at all, but a boy! When the cat is kidnapped, Roger and Dorothy soon learn that someone's been genetically engineering these creatures, and it's a race against time as they seek to rescue it before the kidnappers choose to dispose of the evidence… permanently!

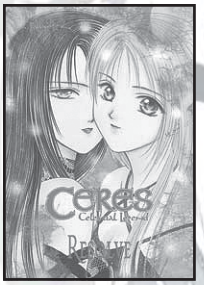
## BOOGIEPOP PHANTOM

Right Stuf, Cat.# RS9021/22, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 90 min. ea, $19.98 ea ($29.95 ea), avail. on 9-25-01 & 10-30-01. **Vol. 1: Evolution**. There have always been forces in the world and voices in the night: some friendly and others malevolent. Invisible until summoned, they slide through dimensions as people walk through doorways. They wait, and watch the doings of Man closely, each for their own reasons. Sometimes, they appear, and when they do, the world changes. Everyone knows about Boogiepop: meet her one dark night and you are taken. People tell each other the stories and laugh: no one believes that she exists in this day and age. Still, there are some strange things that appear to be going on just below the surface. Darkness takes many forms, though. Evil and good intermingle. There is something in the darkness. You aren't alone. Are you safe? **Vol. 2**. From Watanabe Takashi, the well-known director of the popular comedic fantasy *Slayers*, comes the polar opposite of that series — an arty, atmospheric fright fest! In the darkness, you are not safe. On the other side of the door is danger. Up in the skies is a rainbow that isn't. You are kept company only by your own fear... Boogiepop. Few even believe that Boogiepop exists in this enlightened age; it's usually more like an urban myth used to frighten the ignorant. Anyway, more frightening things than Boogiepop actually did exist... at least, they did five years ago. A serial killer held the city in fear, slashing and murdering seemingly at random. Then, without ever catching the killer... the murders ended. Then came the flash of light in the darkness... A momentary glitch. For some, panic and death stalked the streets again. The shadow had a face. Boogiepop ... But she is not the only one... This amazing story is told by a fascinating group of characters, a bit from each character's point of view. The captivating design, music, and story will keep fans coming back for subsequent episodes! Contains three episodes, "My Fair Lady," "Interlude" and "Mother's Day."

## CARDCAPTOR SAKURA

Pioneer, Cat.# 10566/67 (71440/41), Subtitled DVD (Subtitled VHS), 100 min. ea, $29.98 ea ($24.98 ea), avail. on 9-11-01 & in November. **Vol. 5: Vacation Daze**. Summer is nearly over but Sakura's tests never end! Sakura's school stages a test of courage in some scary caves, but when the Erase card makes her friends disappear, Sakura and Li rise to the challenge! Then, The Glow Card creates a romantic mood with Yukito, only to have it spoiled by Li, Toya, and her undone homework. If only The Move Card would leave her books alone! Finally, Li's cousin, Mei-Lin, arrives from Hong Kong to help Li capture the Clow Cards, but she thinks Sakura likes Li! No Way! **Vol. 6: Friends And Family**. Card by card, Sakura gets closer to capturing them all, still, the cards find plenty of ways to make trouble! Sakura thought the Loop Card's never-ending race was tiring, but the Sleep Card's about to teach Sakura's father what tired really means! Now even Sakura's friends have to help out when The Song Card makes Tomoyo keep singing until she gets her song perfect. And, Sakura's been turned tiny by the Little Card - how will she defeat this when her magic key is too huge to hold? Ganbarre Sakura!!

## CERES CELESTIAL LEGEND



Viz Video, Cat.# ACD-04/5 (ACV-04/5), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 78 min. ea, $24.95 ea ($29.95 ea), avail. on 10-16-01 & 11-13-01. **Vol. 4: Resolve**. A girl named Chidori approaches Aya and Yuhi and asks the two to see her hospitalized brother Shiota. But this hospital is no ordinary house of medicine-each of the patients are descendants of Celestials, and they're being used as test subjects for Kagami's nefarious Project C! Then, Toya decides that Aya is more precious than even his lost memories and forsakes Kagami to help his true love. Contains 3 complete episodes.**Vol. 5: The Progenitor**. The progenitor of the Mikage clan, the man that originally stole Ceres' hagoromo, is starting to take over Aki's mind - causing him to begin lusting after Aya. Grandfather Mikage is overjoyed with the transformation... until Aki goes on a rampage. Meanwhile, Toya discovers a clue which could possibly trigger him to remember everything about his past.

## CREST OF THE STARS VOL. 3 - WAYWARD SOLDIERS

Bandai, Cat.# 0692, Bilingual DVD, 75 min., $29.98, avail. on 10-02-01. A civil war erupts in Fedbash territory and Lafiel and Jinto Must fight for their survival on hostile ground. After their escape plan fails, they are forced to make an emergency landing on a nearby planet. Lafiel has never spent much time on the ground and despite Jinto's best efforts to conceal her identity, they are soon being hunted by the local authorities and the United Mankind!

## GASARAKI VOL. 6: THE FIRES OF WAR

ADV Films, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $19.98 ($29.98), avail. on 9-25-01. As Yushiro and Miharu seek to escape, the seeds sowed by Symbol and Gowa begin to reap their bitter fruit. Like dominoes toppling over one by one, the barriers holding back the fires of war begin to crumble and the future of Japan hangs. Now only the actions of a few human pawns can tip the scales away from the edge of the abyss. Trapped and alone, Yushiro and Miharu find themselves aided by an unexpected ally and betrayed by another in the sixth spectacular collection of Gasaraki!

## GATEKEEPERS VOL. 2: NEW FIGHTERS

Pioneer, Cat.# 71722 (11620), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $24.98 ($29.98), avail. on 11-13-01. The Aegis Agency scours Japan searching for more Gatekeepers to join the fight against the invaders. Soon, Bancho (Big Boss) and Kaoru Konoe are recruited to join Shun, Ruriko and Reiko in their training for battle. Unfortunately, they quickly discover that making these wildly different teenagers work together may be more challenging than fighting the invaders!

The "New Releases" section contains promotional material produced by the anime releasers. For reviews, see "Anime Review" section.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

## GENERATOR GAWL VOL. 4

A.D. Vision, Cat.# GG-004, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $19.98 ($29.98), avail. on 10-09-01. If they fail, tomorrow's history! As time runs out for Gawl and his friends, Kanae offers a shocking revelation that could prove integral to their mission's success. But Kanae's covert disclosure is nothing compared to the powerful, and dangerous, secret the evil Professor Ryuko Saito has in store for them! Now, as an army of evil generators from the future converge in the present, Gawl is forced to generate into a powerful, rage-fueled new form to battle a vicious apparition that could destroy himself, his friends, and his world. Don't miss the exciting final chapter in the thrilling sci-fi smash, Generator Gawl!

## GETTER ROBO: ARMAGEDDON

A.D. Vision, Cat.# GR-002/3D (DVDGR002/3), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min. ea, $19.98 ea ($29.98 ea), avail. on 9-11-01 & 10-23-01. **Vol. 2: Transfiguration**. Hayato. Benkai. Go. Kay. On the ground they're just smart-assed jocks. But when they wrap a couple hundred tons of robot around them, they're the only hope of a ravaged world. But, they need a new weapon against the Invaders: The Getter Dragon! Now, if only they could stop fighting amongst themselves! As the Invaders grow stronger, they don't have much time to work out their troubles. Time's up. Round Two has begun! **Vol. 3: Ascension**. A dark shadow has fallen across the Earth. The black robot has arrived and brings with it a new terror. But its terrifying exo-skeleton is not nearly as frightening as what hides inside it. The Getters take their fight to the seared shell of New York City, and the former center of the world becomes a dangerous playground for deadly robot fighting. The winner of the battle will claim the ultimate prize: The chance to face the ultimate evil from behind the moon. Humanity is pinned to the ground. The count is almost out.

## GOKUDO, SWORDSMAN EXTRAODINAIRE

Anime Works, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 125 min., $24.95 ($29.95), avail. on 10-30-01. Where is it written that heroes have to be heroic? Gokudo is the perfect adventurer, reckless, greedy and ambitious. Unfortunately, that makes him one imperfect crown prince and an even worse hero. With his flaming sword, a tomboy looking for excitement, and the prince of his rival kingdoms, he sets off on a quest to uncover all the great treasures of the world. He'll succeed, or he'll make a fool of himself trying! Contains episodes 1-5.

## GUNDAM MS 08 VOL. 3

Bandai, Cat.# 1702 (1712), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $19.98 ($24.98), avail. on 11-20-01. Universal Century 0079. The 08th MS Team has engaged a new enemy Mobile Armor. As Shiro continues to battle the Apsalus, he recognizes the voice of the pilot — it's Aina! Crash-landing in the snowy mountains, they soon realize that they must work together to survive. Once rescued, Shiro returns to face charges of espionage. And, if that weren't bad enough, a rogue Zeon unit invades Kiki's village. The Zeons, meanwhile, have their own problems as the now-obsessed Gineas is determined to finish the Apsalus, no matter who must pay the price!

## HAND MAID MAY VOL. 2: PRODUCT RECALL

Pioneer, Cat.# 71708 (11591), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $24.98 ($29.98), avail. on 10-09-01. Full Scale Lunatics! Cyberdyne pursues May's recall due to Kazuya's failure to pay the million-dollar invoice. However, thanks to Kasumi's kindness, Kazuya and May share some wonderful last-minute memories. Still, with Nanbara "assisting" Cyberdyne and the introduction of the mysterious Cyber-X, Kazuya's little troubles may become a full sized affair of the heart!

## I'M GONNA BE AN ANGEL VOL. 2 : INVISIBLE GIRL

Synch-Point, Cat.# SPTN-D002 (S002), Dubbed (Subtitled), 75 min., $19.95, avail. in September. You can't really fight back when a family of monsters decides to move in. No matter what Yuusuke says, Noelle's declaration that he is her husband seems to be sticking. Now Noelle is trying to become an angel because of something he said. And to top it all off, the evil Dispel keeps sending monsters after Noelle!

## JEWEL HUNTER LIME BEM

Anime Works, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 90 min., $19.95 ($24.95), avail. on 10-30-01. Strange monsters known as BEM's have escaped from their dimensional world, possessing the indignant spirits naturally occurring inside of everyday items. To stop them, Lime emerges from the other world with a heart full of honesty and a head full of air! She may not have the intellectual savvy, but with her magical powers and gorgeous body, she's determined to rid earth of the insidious BEM's!

## KNIGHT HUNTERS, WEISS KREUZ VOL. 1: DEAD RINGER

Anime Works, Dubbed/Subtitled VHS (Bilingual DVD), 125 min., $24.95 ($29.95), avail. on 10-30-01. Cunning, smart, merciless! Vengeance and justice are theirs! When the moon rises, the boys of Knight Hunters are the most vicious assassins the world has ever seen. Led by the somber and silent Aya, the team consists of Ken, a wide-eyed former athelete, Omi, a young computer specialist, and Yohiji, a suave ladies man. Their four tragic pasts give them the passion to fight! Contains episodes 1-5.

## MAGIC USERS CLUB TV VOL. 1: I WANNA DO MORE

Anime Works, Cat.# MT-4009 (MTD-4011), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 100 min., $19.95 ($24.95), avail. on 09-25-01. The aliens have been defeated, and the Bell has been transformed into a gigantic cherry tree. Now, the brave Magic User's Club must reconvene to deal with a new problem. Apparently some inconsiderate person's left a skyscraper-sized cherry tree in the middle of Tokyo, and it's become a major inconvenience to everyone in the city. Even though they have no idea who could have done such a thing, the Club feels strangely responsible and spring into action!

## MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

Bandai, Cat.# 1761-62/1771-72, Dubbed VHS/Bilingual DVDs, 125 min. ea., $14.98/$24.98 ea., avail. on 10-02-01. **Vol. 2: The Red Comet!** & **Vol. 3: The Threat of Zeon**. Universal Century 0079. The Gundam and the White Base become the primary target of the Zeon Forces. Char Aznable, the Zeon ace pilot, is very interested in the Gundam and it's abilities, while Garma, one of the commanders of the Zeon forces, makes it his personal mission to capture the Gundam. Chased across the galaxy and around the Earth, Amuro and the rest of the White Base crew begin to lose hope. The war seems endless, but the fighting continues...

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## NADIA SECRET OF THE BLUE WATER VOL. 3: ABOARD THE NAUTILUS

A.D. Vision, Cat.# NS-003, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 100 min., $19.98 ($29.98), avail. on 09-25-01. With Gargoyle's terrible weapon destroyed, Jean, Nadia and the rest find themselves once again rescued by the Nautilus. Hot on the trail of a fleeing Gargoyle, the pursuers become the pursued. Will Hanson and Sanson be able to save the ship alone? Why was Captain Nemo so shocked to meet Nadia? What are the memories the Nautilus has triggered within Nadia?

## NIEA UNDER 7 VOL. 2: FUNKY WATER BLUES

Pioneer, Cat.# 11593, Bilingual DVD, 75 min., $29.98, avail. on 10-09-01. In an attempt to draw in more customers, the bathhouses of Enohana resort to strange gimmicks. Mayuka's company holds a video game contest to lure young customers, while Chada starts a rival bathhouse that relies upon secret advantages. Which will triumph!? Meanwhile, Mayuko begins to face her own confusion and apathy towards life and NieA begins to sense an ominous voice emanating from within the alien mothership.

## ORPHEN VOL. 2: SUPERNATURAL POWERS

A.D. Vision, Cat.# OP-002, Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $19.98 ($29.98), avail. on 9-11-01. The "Heiress With Attitude" is getting tired of traveling with sorcerer-turned-dragon hunters Orphen and Majic. So when Cleao hears about the legend of a monster near the mysterious resort at Mount Kahlna, it's no surprise when she goes to check it out. But neither Cleao nor her friends are quite prepared for the truth behind the legend! Later, the group meets Fiena, a gentle girl with the magical power to heal animals — a trait that comes in handy when the forest is populated with shotgun-happy hunters. Yet the hunters aren't the only dangers in this forest, for watching their every move are several pairs of glowing, yellow, angry eyes!

## PILOT CANDIDATE VOL. 1

Bandai, Cat.# 1850 (1855), Dubbed VHS (Bilingual DVD), 75 min., $14.98 ($24.98), avail. on 11-6-01. In the year 4084, Zion, the last planet left to humanity, is under constant attack by the VKDMs, a mysterious alien presence seeking to destroy the last remnants of the human race. The only thing standing in their way are five unique mecha called INGRIT, better known as the Goddesses. Each one is piloted by the best the world has to offer, pilots with the strange "EX" ability to enhance their combat skill. These brave young men and their female repairers fight a never-ending but constantly escalating battle against the VKDM... but first require the necessary training. The Goddess Operator Academy (GOA) is where the hundreds of candidates are trained and tested in the art of combat, competing against each other for the ultimate chance of being one of the few individuals to pilot the Goddesses. Follow the exploits of the newest candidate, Zero Enna, a young boy full of enthusiasm and determination to become a pilot, and a remarkably high EX rating.

## POKEMON VOL. 1: ORANGE ISLAND

Viz, Dubbed DVD, 250 min., $24.98, avail. in October. Ash and his friends depart for the Orange Islands! While they may leave some old friends behind and meet new friends, Ash and Pikachu continue their wild adventures on Ash's quest to become a Pokemon Master! Ten English dubbed episodes on one disc!

## POKEMON : THE JOHTO JOURNEYS

Viz Video, Cat.# PK-045/46, VHS Dubbed (Bilingual DVD), 70 min. ea., $14.98 ea ($24.98 ea), avail. on 9-25-01. **Vol. 45 (#7): Team Green**. It's time for Chikorita, Sunflora and a Hoppip-impersonating Oddish to grow out of old habits and mature. Fortunately, they have Brock, Ash, and Nurse Joy to help them. Even Team Rocket gives an accidental assist as their plot's predictably backfires - Team Rocket's blasting off again! **Vol. 46 (#8): Crimson Warrior**. Ash and his friends try to discover the secret identity of a superhero with a Gligar fixation and a way to help little Mary with her Mareep. However, they're most amazed by the awesome performance of the Scizor! Unfortunately for Ash, after Shingo, the Scizor's trainer, uses his computer to analyze Ash, Shingo decides that Ash is too inferior to even bother battling! Can Ash find a way to get Shingo to change his mind!?

## POWERSTONE — MYSTERY OF THE STONES

ADV Films, Dubbed VHS, 100 min., $19.98, avail. on 10-30-01. When young Edward Falcon's adventurer father entrusts him with a mysterious stone, Falcon would rather pursue his dream of being a world famous fighter than babysit a rock. But if it's just a simple rock, why thieves, ninjas, and crazy rogues are chasing Falcon to get it? Soon, Falcon realizes this isn't an ordinary rock. It's one of legendary Powerstones, magical gems that possess awesome powers-even the power to transform a young fighter into a rocket-powered robot warrior! Join Falcon and his friends as they travel to far off lands on a magical journey to collect all the mysterious Powerstones!

## ROBOTECH

A.D. Vision, Cat.# DVDRT005/6/7/8, Dubbed DVDs, 150 min. ea., $14.98 ea, avail. on 9-18-01 & 10-30-01. **The Macross Saga Vol. 5.** As a massive Zentraedi armada prepares for a final assault on the people of Earth, preparations for battle take a back seat to a historic union between one of Earth's greatest heroes and an ace Zentraedi combat pilot: the wedding of Max Sterling and Miriya. But the celebration is short-lived when all of Earth's resources are put to the test as the full force of the Zentraedi Fleet attack with savage fury! Contains episodes 25-30 of the classic Macross Saga of Robotech. **The Macross Saga Vol. 6.** The reconstruction of the Earth is slow going. It is a time of great uncertainty on both a global and personal scale. The reappearance of Khyron, the rogue Zentraedi warlord, offers the Robotech Defense Force a final opportunity to restore peace to their savaged planet. The lives and loves of these beleaguered survivors form the backdrop to an ultimate showdown for the fate of mankind! Contains episodes 31-36 of the classic Macross Saga of Robotech. Also available: **Robotech The Macross Saga DVD Box Set 3** (Cat.# DVDRTBX3, 325 min., $44.98). This special 3-disc collector's edition includes Vol. 5 and 6, plus the third installment in the Elements of Robotechnology extras series available only in this collection. **Robotech Masters Vol. 1: A New Threat**.Fifteen years of peace are shattered when a new invasion force - the Robotech Masters - wage war against the Earth's struggling survivors. The victor's prize is control of the mysterious Protoculture Matrix - the secret powerhouse of Robotechnology. A whole new cast of heroes and villains re-invigorate the powerful story of intergalactic war and personal drama that has made Robotech one of the most enduring science fiction adventures of all time. **Robotech Masters Vol. 2: Revelations**. As the Robotech Defense Forces struggle to keep the Robotech Masters from establishing a foothold on Earth, the true nature of Protoculture and the consequences for those who control its secrets are slowly revealed. Combat gives way to strategy and misguided diplomacy as the 2nd Robotech War shifts into high gear. The irresistible mix of fascinating science fiction, wild improbable combat and turgid melodrama can only be found in the complex worlds of Robotech. Also available: **Robotech Masters: Robotech Legacy - Collection 4** (315 min., $44.98). This special 3-disc collector's edition which includes A NEW THREAT, REVELATIONS and an exclusive extras disc available only in this collection. This bonus disc includes original opening/closing sequences from the original Japanese series; a gallery of the original Robotech Masters comic book covers; production sketches; and more exclusive international clips available exclusively in this 3-disc collector's edition.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

## RUROUNI KENSHIN

Anime Works, Cat.# RK-0322/23/24/25 (RKD-2011/12), Dubbed/Subtitled VHS (Bilingual DVD), 100 / 125 min., $24.95 ea ($29.95), avail. on 9-25-01 & 10-30-01. **Vol. 12: Blind Justice**. The killer Usui serves as one of Shishio's most powerful lieutenants, despite the fact he is blind. The last survivor of the Shinsengumi, Hajime Saito, believes that only one willing to commit murder can defeat Usui. Therefore, he challenges the blind assassin himself and lets Kenshin go ahead on the road to Shishio. Yet, another legendary warrior appears to block Kenshin's path. Shinomori Aoshi has returned, and this time he plans to kill Kenshin and then take his own life. Can Kenshin thaw his heart and bring him back to the woman who is waiting for him? **Vol. 13: Innocence And Experience**. Kenshin Himura, sworn to defeat the evil Shishio, has only one obstacle between him and the mad lord himself. This obstacle is Sojiro, the boy assassin! Faster, stronger, and more skilled than Kenshin, Sojiro's temperament makes him immune to the special techniques of Kenshin's Hiten Mitsurugi style! He is called the Tenken, because his swordmanship can only be a gift from the heavens! Contains episodes 53-57.

## SAILOR MOON

A.D. Vision, Cat.# VMN-011/12, VHS Dubbed, 90 min. ea, $12.98 ea, avail. on 9-11-01. **Vol. 11: The Return Of Sailor Moon**. Queen Beryl may have been defeated, but there's still plenty of evil for Sailor Moon to fight. After a brief period as a normal teenager, Serena finds herself forced back into duty as the Earth's protector when the horrifying Doom Tree comes to our world to gather energy from unsuspecting humans. But now that the other Sailor Scouts have lost their memories, Sailor Moon will have to protect Mankind all by herself! **Vol. 12: Tree Of Doom**. As the evil Anne and Alan continue to scheme up new ways to steal the Earth's energy for the Doom Tree, will even the combined power of all the Sailor Scouts be enough? The power of friendship will be tested as never before as our planet's mightiest protectors join forces in their greatest battles yet! Fight on, Sailor Moon!

## SAILOR MOON S

Pioneer, Cat.# 71696/97 & 71699/71700 (71698 & 71701), VHS Dubbed Edited/Uncut (VHS Subtitled Uncut), 70 min. ea., $14.98 ea., avail. on 10-9-01. **Vol. 9: Hotaru's Secret.** Chibi-Usa's new best friend, Hotaru has another personality with awesome powers! Unfortunately, her father, Professor Tomoe, is also part of the evil Death Busters who are attempting to destroy the world. The Sailor Soldiers of the Outer Solar System, convinced that Hotaru is a threat, continue to dismiss Sailor Moon, but will Hotaru's real secret bring the Sailor Scouts together or tear them apart?! **Vol. 10: Sailor Saturn**. Hotaru's powers grow stronger, and so do the suspicions of Sailor Uranus, Sailor Neptune and Sailor Pluto. Soon everyone suspects that Hotaru may not only be Sailor Saturn, but also the Sovereign of Silence - the nightmare that brings the world of darkness and destruction! The three Outer Solar System Sailor soldiers are determined to prevent the darkness, but can they destroy a fellow Sailor Soldier?! Also available on DVD as **Sailor Moon S Heart Collection Vol. 5** (Cat.# 11478V, 140 min., $29.98) which collects volumes 9 & 10.

## SPACE TRAVELERS

Anime Works, Cat.# AW-0113/14, Bilingual DVD/VHS Dubbed, 60 min., $24.95/$19.95, avail. on 9-25-01. In the new Cosmic Century 038, humanity is suddenly attacked by an unknown alien civilization known as the Orbital Ring System. Soon, the entire Earth Civilization Sphere has been cut off from the space colonies, and is under the control of the ORS. Only Hayabusha Jetter, along with his band of misfit space pirates and smugglers, can break through ORS lines. Aiding an underground resistance movement, the Space Travelers risk their lives to transport vital supplies to and from Earth. However, a mysterious gentleman hires them to deliver an unmarked spherical container… a simple package that may hold the key to mankind's destiny!

## URUSEI YATSURA TV SERIES VOL. 4

AnimEigo, Cat.# AV000-104, Subtitled DVD, 100 min., $24.95, avail. on 9-25-01. During a Hawaiian vacation, someone starts swiping the girl's swimsuits; Cherry and Sakura take a Hotel's "Full Course From Hell" "Free if you can eat it all" challenge; Mendou Shutaro, the richest boy in Japan, is transferred to Tomobiki High, and causes chaos when he runs for class president; Lum uses high-tech astrology to decide who is the best match for her: Ataru or Mendou; Benten and her fellow Chinese Gods of Luck have their annual End-of-Winter grudge match against Lum and the Oni; Benten comes back with a few friends to make Lum's life lousy; A mysterious teacher-for-hire arrives at the school, and he's going to clean up the class; and if you think Lum, Ataru and Mendou are bad, the first meeting of their mothers threatens to plunge the galaxy into war! *Urusei Yatsura*: It's Japanese for "Outrageously Funny!"

## X THE MOVIE

Manga Entertainment, Cat.# D4046, Bilingual DVD, 96 min., $29.95, avail. on 9-25-01. Kamui Shirou, a man mysteriously endowed with psychic powers of great magnitude, returns from 6-years of self-imposed exile, heralding the salvation of humanity, or its utter annihilation. A harbinger of hope, or desolation, and caught between two opposing factions seeking to gain his favor in the brewing confrontation; the Dragons of Earth, which seek to purify earth by unleashing the seven angels of heaven and the onset of Armageddon, thus cleansing it of mankind's destructive presence...or the Dragons of Heaven, which covet the sanctity of humanity, and defy the threat of total extinction... he alone must stem the tides of fate.

## YAMAMOTO YOHKO STARSHIP GIRL VOL. 3

Right Stuf, Cat.# RS9013, Dubbed VHS, 60 min., $19.98, avail. on 9-25-01. There is an ancient legend on a distant planet which states that four goddesses will one day descend from the skies and all will be right with the world. Meanwhile, Yohko and the rest of the Terra team have crashed on a backwater world, and they have to figure out a way off before their new charge gets hungry again! Also on this volume: Every so often, a celebration takes place in one of the most beautiful places in the Universe: a cosmic Sakura fest! It's a time of celebration and a time of peace, but it seems that someone didn't get the message! Also available: **Yamamoto Yohko Starship Girl Vol. 1-3 Boxed Set** (Cat.# RS9014/RDVD9010, Dubbed VHS/Bilingual DVDs, 180 min., $39.95 ea.).

## ZENKI

Anime Works, Cat.# EFD-8902, Bilingual DVD, 325 min., $39.95, avail. on 9-25-01. One thousand years ago, all manner of evil creatures beset Earth. Only the high priest, Ozuno, could control the guardian demon named Zenki and protect the world. Fearful that no one would ever be able to control the destructive Zenki, Ozuno sealed the creature in a stone monument before he passed on. Centuries later, strange demonic objects known as the Seeds of Evil have been appearing once again, and with them come doom for all mankind. Now, a young priestess named Chiaki Ozuno uncovers the monument, and must summon Zenki! Will she find a way to control him, or will Earth's salvation spell her destruction? This DVD collects episodes 1-13!

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Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order #53033488)

# BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

FROM THE CREATORS OF
"GHOST IN THE SHELL"
BLOOD
THE LAST VAMPIRE
DIGITAL IMAGING HAS ENTERED A NEW ERA.
"THE WORLD WILL COME TO CONSIDER THIS WORK AS THE
STANDARD OF TOP QUALITY IN DIGITAL ANIMATION."
-JAMES CAMERON, DIRECTOR OF "TITANIC"
DVD

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Saya**: Appearing at various times and places, this enigmatic girl hunts chiropterans with a Japanese sword. Members of one of the organizations chasing the chiropterans refers to her as an "original", but her identity is enveloped in mystery.

**Chiropterans**: It is speculated that chiropterans, with hollow bones and skin that can expand and shrink at will, are able to change form through a distention of their blood vessels. This ability has enabled some of them to take on human form and live covertly among other humans. It has been said that the legend of vampires evolved in various parts from the haphazard sightings of these creatures in their original form. Some also believe that these blood-sucking anthropoid "chiropterans" took a diverging path in the evolution from anthropoid to man. However, their true identity is unclear.

**Eternal Life Project**: In 1806, a book listed in the inheritance inventory of a prominent family was discovered. While the book suggests plans for creating a being possessing eternal life by combining human and vampire blood, it is not known whether or not this plan was indeed carried out. Some claim that this book contains a list of chiropterans, and others claim that the chiropterans are the result of the project to create beings of mixed human and vampire blood. At the present time, anything is possible.

**"Organizations" pursuing the Chiropterans**: It is reported that various "organizations" that have ferreted out the existence of the chiropterans, such as powerful European families, religious states, and special intelligence agencies, have their own particular interests in pursuing them. Some seek to protect and take advantage of them, others seek to purge them... One can catch glimpses of these organizations in the backdrop of various bloodstained, eerie incidents, but their goals and overall perspective remain shrouded in mystery.

One of Production I.G's (*Ghost In The Shell, Jin-Roh* ) latest projects, *Blood: The Last Vampire* is definitely one of the most impressive animations we have seen these last few years, a true masterpiece capable of standing up to (and beat) the decade's best. Created and written by Mamoru Oshii (Director of *Ghost In The Shell* . He also wrote the novel and worked on the Sony Playstation 2 game) and directed by Hiroyuki Kitakubo (*Roujin Z*, *Robot Carnival*, *Golden Boy* ), *Blood: The Last Vampire* features some of the newest and most innovative computer animation techniques available today, flawlessly mixed with standard 2D digital animation. The character designs, by Katsuya Terada, are superb (if a little unsettling at first, because they do NOT look like anime characters), the soundtrack is excellent and the story, even if simple, keeps the viewer riveted to his seat. However, *Blood* 's true strength resides in its creators' stunningly effective (as well as very subtle) use of computer technology, which gives the viewer the impression that he is looking at a live-action movie rather than an animation, the only giveaway being the characters. Our only negative comment is that *Blood* is way too short! WE WANT MORE!! See our Feature Article in PA #63: pg. 23-24. [Reviewed by Martin Ouellette]

Manga Video, Dubbed/ Subtitled VHS (Bilingual DVD), 48 min., $19.95/ $24.95 ($24.95).

| Designs: **4.5** | Animation: **4.5** | Soundtrack: **4** | Story: **4** | Translation: **3.5** | Average: **4** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## The Story Of Blood

The story of the movie is part of a more global story line that records the conflicts between the chiropterans and the humans. The enigmatic "Saya" appears in three of those Blood Battles: the Battle at the Yokota Air Force Base, taking place in 1966 and told by the movie; the Battle at Ochanomizu, Tokyo, taking place during the student-workers demonstrations of 1969 and told by Mamoru Oshii's novel; the Tokyo Battle taking place in 2000 and told by the Playstation 2 video game.

The movie takes place in the fall of 1966. The Vietnam War is underway and the U.S. military machine is being supplied out of the Yokota Air Force Base — a plot of U.S. land within Japan. Within the compound, the atmosphere is charged wilh violent intensity as F4 combat planes take off hastily one after the next. Meanwhile, a series of suspicious suicides are reported in town. On the Ginza subway line — the last train heading toward Asakusa, a girl sits quietly in a dreary subway car. Her name is Saya. With a piercing gaze that would force even an adult into submission and lips tightly drawn with determination, she is the savior sent by the "organization" to vanquish the blood-sucking chiropterans that have concealed themselves among their human hosts. Clad in a Japanese school uniform, and wielding an ancient Samurai sword, Saya must infiltrate the American school within the Yokota military compound, uncover the source of the pestilence, and eliminate it.

***Blood: The Last Vampire***. Japan, 2000, 48 min., 35mm, color, vista size, Dolby Digital. STAFF: Director: Hiroyuki Kitakubo; Planning in Cooperation with: Mamoru Oshii (Team Oshii); Character Design: Katsuya Terada; Planning / Original Concept: Production I.G.; Scriptwriter: Kenji Kamiyama; Technical Supervisor: Shinji Takagi; Animation Director: Kazuchika Kise; Art Director: Yuusuke Takeda; Director of Visual Concept: Hisashi Ezura; Color Design: Katsue Inoue; 3D CGI: Tokumitsu Kifune; Filming: Miki Sakuma; Sound Director: Keiichi Momose; Music: Yoshihiro Ike; Original Soundtrack: SPE Visual Works; Producer / Original Concept: Production I.G.; Animation Producer: IG Plus; Producers: SPE Visual Works, Sony Computer Entertainment, IG Plus, IPA; Distributor in Japan: Sony Pictures Entertainment / SPE Visual Works Films Division; World Distributor (except Asia): Manga Entertainment. CAST: Youki Kudoh (Saya), Saemi Nakamura (Infirmary Doctor), Joe Romersa (David).

## The Film Production

*Blood: The Last Vampire*, a full digital animation work that will send shivers throughout the world, opened in mid-November of 2000 in Japan at Cine Saison Shibuya and several other theaters in major cities throughout Japan. This film gathered together the talents of many World-renowned Japanese artists and animators. Spearheaded by Director Hiroyuki Kitakubo (*Roujin Z*), the project was conceived in cooperation with Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*), and features character designs by the charismatic illustrator Katsuya Terada.

Saya, the film's mysterious, brooding protagonist, is played by the vivacious Youki Kodoh, who recently made her Hollywood debut in the feature film *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Recorded and mixed in Hollywood, the dynamic digital sound skillfully complements the film, helping to achieve a level of artistic imagery unparalleled in previous Japanese animated films. *Blood: The Last Vampire* was conceived and produced specifically with the intention of enjoying World-wide distribution and will be released by Manga Entertainment in the United States, Europe and Canada within the year!

The original story behind *Blood: The Last Vampire* was developed in Mamoru Oshii's (*Ghost in the Shell, Patlabor*) first novel and was presented to Japanese audiences through three different media formats: a novel, an epic film and a Playstation 2 video game. Clues hidden throughout each of the three stories reveal components of the deeper mystery contained within Oshii's grand vision.

***Blood: The Last Vampire*** © 2000 Production I.G. / SVW • SCEI • IG PLUS • IPA. For more information: www.sonymusic.co.jp/blood/ or www.manga.com.

Kirsty Bradley Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE (Continued)

## Production Staff and Cast

**Hiroyuki KITAKUBO: Director**. Born November 15, 1963. Kitakubo entered the animation industry at the age of 15, contributing to *Urusei Yatsura* (TV Series) and *Akira* (1988) as animator. He made his directing debut with *Pop Chaser* (1985), an episode in the *Cream Lemon* series. He went on to direct *Black Magic M-66* in 1987 alongside industry legend Masamune Shirow (original story, *Ghost in the Shell*). In 1991, he directed *Roujin Z* — a film which brought together the stellar staff of Katsuhiro Otomo (original work/screenplay/mechanical design) and Hisashi Eguchi (original characlers). Kitakubo also drew widespread attention for his outstanding direction of the animated sequences within the PlayStation version of the game *Ghost in the Shell* (1997) — a project that used cutting-edge technology to merge cel animation with digital screens.

**Mamoru OSHII: Cooperative Planning**. Born in Tokyo, August 8, 1951. Oshii went freelance following stints at Tatsunoko Productions and Pierrot Studio. Among the major works he has directed are *Urusei Yatsura 2: Beautiful Dreamer* (1984), *Patlabor* The Movie (1989), and *Ghost in the Shell* (1995). He is also known for his original work and screenplay for the film *Jinroh* (1999). Winning worldwide acclaim for the images created by his dynamic and innovative directing style, he has influenced numerous filmmakers, including the Wachowski brothers — directors of the box-office hit *The Matrix*. In addition to his work in animation, Oshii has directed live-aclion films and written a number of novels including *Blood: The Last Vampire — The Night of the Beasts*.

**Satsuma TERADA: Character Design**. Born in Okayama prefecture, December 7, 1963. Terada began his career as a freelance illustrator and comic book artist immediately after graduating from school. Since that time, he has made many diverse contributions in the fields of illustration, comic books, video games, movies, and theater. The images he creates have such an overwhelming sense of presence that those who have seen his work are left with an indelible impression. Among his major works are the computer games *Tantei Jinguuji Saburou* and *Virtua Fighter 2*. He contributed the character designs for the animated movies *Mirai Ninja* and *Zeiram*, as well as those used in the CG comic book *Saiyuu Kiden Daiennou*. He has also created poster designs for the Shinkansen theatrical company. At the insistence of director Kitakubo, he agreed to provide the character design for *Blood: The Last Vampire*. Last year saw the publication of a collection of all his works to date entitled *Katsuya Terada: An Anthology* (Kodansha Press).

**Youki KUDOH: Main Character's (Saya) Voice Actress**. Born in Tokyo, January 17, 1971. Kudoh entered the entertainment industry at the age of 12. She made her screen dedut in 1984 with the movie *Gyakufunsha Kazoku* (directed by Sougo Ishii). In addition to pursuing a singing career, she has appeared in two acclaimed works by the spirited and talented directors Shinji Soumai and Toshiya Itou — 1984's *Typhoon Club* and *Hanazono no Meikyuu* in 1988. In a particularly challenging role that won her the "Blue Ribbon Award" for Best Actress, Kudoh played two characters in the 1991 film *Sensou to Seishun* — the posthumous work of the legendary director Tadashi Imai. Her international film career was launched with the 1989 film *Mystery Train* (Jim Jarmusch, Director) co-starring Masatoshi Nagase. She made her Hollywood debut with *Snow Falling on Cedars* (Scott Hicks, director, 1999). Making full use of her considerable acting talents as well as her proficiency with the English language, Kudoh takes on a new challenge by providing the voice of Saya, the main character in *Blood: The Last Vampire*.

**Production I.G.**: Production I.G. has consistently produced some of the highest quality animation ever created. Their credits include such groundbreaking films as *Neon-Genesis Evangelion*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and *Jin-roh*. The studio supervised the animation and development of all five works in the "interaclive drama" series: the movie, Oshii's novel, the manga series (serialized in *Ace Next*, story by Kenji Kamiyama, art by Benkyou Tamaki), the novel series (serialized in *Dragon* magazine, written by Junichi Fujisaku and illustrated by Satoru Nakamura) and the illustrated movie program. [Executive Director: Junichi Fujisaku; Animation Director: Yukio Takahashi; Executive Animation Director/Character Design: Satoru Nakamura; Original Story: Kazuo Yamazaki/Mitsuhiro Tougou; Cooperative Planning: Mamoru Oshii (Team Oshii); Original Characters: Katsuya Terada].

**Mitsuhisa Ishikawa, president of Production I.G.**

"There is no conclusion to this story. Most stories are designed to head toward a predetermined conclusion. However, if the heroine refuses to have her story told from the start, what kind of story could one tell? If she were human, her story would generally fall within the bounds of our imagination. Even if she were a beast, her story would not be unfathomable. However, if she were part human, part beast, what kind of imagination could capture this girl's story? Humans act with even greater brutality than beasts themselves in order to massacre the accursed monsters. Beasts avenge themselves with even greater cruelty than humans, but through their own foolishness inflict harm upon their own kind. A loner expelled from human society as well as the domain of beasts, paying heed to no one, beholden to no one – this beautiful nocturnal creature simply roams the darkness, bringing about a cruel destiny to all those who cross her path. Only undying legends will forever capture the tale of this accursed creature. They call her Saya. She shows herself at various places and times. If this girl's existence is contingent on the number of stories told, the only things we can be certain about are that a girl named Saya existed at some time, and that even now, somewhere, she seethes with anger and hatred toward humans and beasts; carving a history of brutality for all these she encounters, but never being reflected in the mirror of time, she simply drifts through the eternal present — that is why there is no conclusion to Saya's story."

Mamoru Oshii, September 19, 2000

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

## SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN [*KAGAKU NINJA TAI GATCHAMAN*]: INTRODUCTION

Back in the late 70's, most of North America was introduced to a new animation series that would alter how a lot of us viewed "cartoons". The series was called *Battle of the Planets* and for someone like me – a neophyte Marvel Comics zombie mainlining on *Star Wars* – it was manna from the heavens. First of all this show looked, acted and was vastly superior to the animated crap that was being shoved down our throats by American animators at that time (have you tried to sit through any of that stuff recently? It's awful!). Throw in some fairly complex plots, character development, and cool mecha and you had yourself a really innovative show. It didn't hurt that it contained classic elements from Japanese monster (kaiju) films either (the intro of the first episode must be a homage to *Godzilla*). Like many at that time, I was hooked. Little did I realise that this show would continue to affect me for the rest of my life, sparking a passion for anime that continues to this day.

Surprisingly, many thought that the show originated from the US – the distributing company did a good job of suppressing the show's true origins. However, for those of us watching closely enough, it was quite obvious that *Battle of the Planets* was poorly disguised and from Japan. The added animation was of inferior quality to the original Japanese; and despite attempts to make the show episodic, you could tell that the stories were all part of a larger whole. More astute viewers could even tell that the galaxy spanning battles actually took place on Earth – evidence contrary to what was being shown or told.

While some of the changes were quite obvious, there were many things that I wouldn't find out until years later. *Battle of the Planets* was modified from the popular Tatsunoko series *Kagaku Ninja Tai Gatchaman* (*Science Ninja Team Gatchaman*) originally broadcast in Japan during the early 70's for a whopping 105 episodes (that's one a week for the 2 years it was on, for those who want to avoid doing the math). *BOTP* was only 85 episodes long and among the changes, various interesting sub-plots were cut – The oddball secret of the leader of Spectra and the death of a major character. Other things glazed over in the *BOTP* version were the death of Mark's father and the violence contained in most episodes. Hey, they had to get it past North America's strict code for children's programming. Most of the stuff they cut would have been too intense for most young children. Hearing about the things that I had been missing, I tried to see the original version for myself. It was quite an eye opener. Up until the mid-90's, this show was still looking very good – superior even to a lot of series from the 80's. There were two sequels to *Gatchaman* in Japan (the creatively titled "II", and "F" or Fighter) as well as a theatrical movie and an OAV remake in 1994.

After a few years in syndication, *BOTP* disappeared from television for a short while to be re-birthed on Ted Turner's Cartoon Network in the Fred Ladd produced *G-Force*. This English produced version was much closer to the original show in intent, but fans have complained about the character names, lack-lustre voice acting and awful additional music.

In 1996, *Gatchaman II* and *F* were released in English as *Eagle Riders*. Only 13 episodes were shown on most stations in the US, but more of this version ran in Australia and Europe. *Eagle Riders* was once again more faithful to the original, but certain plot elements were altered. I find it weird and difficult to watch this one. I imagine it's the same feeling one would get watching *BOTP* if they had never seen it before.

*Gatchaman*'s influencing white shadow looms large, long lasting and cannot be denied. In Japan it is responsible for creating the "team" series of heroes which affected many a giant robot show afterwards (even *Gundam*). *Nadesico*'s show within a show, a parody of giant robot shows called *Gekigangar 3*, even spoofs characters from *Gatchaman* by appropriating character names, their positions on the team, and their fates. It is also a clear influence on the live action series' that became known as *Power Rangers* on these shores. The shows mature themes also marked it as one of the first anime series not aimed solely at children, making it one of the pioneering programs to get animation out of the "kiddie ghetto" in Japan and more respected by an older audience. Most Japanese know the words to the theme song to heart like most North Americans know the words to *Gilligan's Island*. Including its sequels, *Gatchaman* ran for 205 episodes making it one of the longest running animated dramas in Japan (placing it in the company of *Gundam* and *Dragonball*). Fairly recently popular boy band *SMAP* did an advertising campaign as *Gatchaman*. A pricey laser disc box set containing all the episodes around 10 years ago was highly successful and it

***Gatchaman*** ©1972 Tatsunoko Production. ***Battle Of The Planets*** ©1978-79 Gallerie Intl/Tatsunoko Pro/Sandy Frank. ***G-Force*** ©1986 Gallerie/Tatsunoko/Turner. ***Eagle Riders*** ™&©1996 Saban.

Kinsey Beasley Bardell (Order - 53033483)

## SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: INTRODUCTION (Continued)

still runs on Japanese TV regularly. Pretty amazing, especially when you consider that the show will be celebrating its 30th anniversary next year.

*Battle of the Planets* was released in various versions across Europe (England, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands), Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Malaysia, Philippines, Trinidad, Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica and more. I don't know how popular it was in most of these places, but it is almost safe to say that *Gatchaman* is a global phenomenon. In North America, the series in all its incarnations has a staunch, loyal following that even organize conventions solely around *Gatchaman*. There are loads of sites on the web (maybe not as many as *Sailor Moon*, but considering how old it is, it's very impressive). I'm totally surprised at the number of devout female fanatics for what many would consider a "boys" show. Thanks in no small part to the charms of Joe, I'm sure. It's because of this devoted fandom that I was able to see a near complete set of *BOTP* of questionable quality (Thanks, Alara).

During the preparation and planning of this article, the once thought impossible has actually materialized. Kid Rhino will be releasing *BOTP* on video and DVD. I never thought this would happen with the *Gatchaman* rights belonging to Ted Turner in the 80's, but it has been done. If things go according to Rhino's information, the DVDs will have two *BOTP* episodes along with the 2 original *Gatchaman* episodes (so you can compare and see what was changed. Cool!). There may be a possibility that an episode of *G-Force* will be on the disc as well. While I would prefer to get more actual episodes per disc, this is a pretty good compromise. Originally to be released this summer, the last we heard is that the release has been pushed back to October. This issue of Protoculture is the first of the planned two part *Gatchaman* overview in all its guises.

This issue we will focus for the most part on the series that started it all, the *Gatchaman* series from Japan. Part two will cover its sequels and the North American versions in more detail (to tie it in more closely to the DVD release when it happens).

## SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: OVERVIEW

The original *Gatchaman* series by the respected Tatsunoko Productions began broadcast weekly on Tokyo's Fuji Television from October 1st 1972 to September 29th 1974. Tatsuo Yoshida, fresh from the success of other, earlier Tatsunoko works such as *Mach Go Go Go* (or *Speed Racer* in English) wanted to create a new series that would spotlight the conflict between the applications of science. He reasoned that science itself is neither good nor evil, but merely becomes that way in the hand of the user. He also wanted to push the boundaries of animation a bit further by making the show mature in its themes, with state of the art animation and quality production values. Originally Yoshida wanted the series to be the successor of *Animentary – Ketsudan* (*The Decision – Animation Plus Documentary*), Tatsunoko's dramatic series that detailed the events leading up to Japan's entrance in World War II from the previous year – a mechanical-action series that revelled in flight.

As more of the ideas started falling into place, the concept of "good" using science as a way to better mankind versus the "evil" who would use science to destroy and subjugate took shape. This would give the creators of the series an excuse to design more unique machines, devices and plot lines. The simplicity of this premise was fleshed out by giving the cast – Gatchaman and Galactor – their own detailed and often tragic lives (some of which may seem cliché today, but in the case of Katse, never equalled) as the synopsis will attest. This characterization is probably the main cause for the longevity of the series and why it holds such a special place in the hearts of fans worldwide.

One of the initial hurdles was deciding when the series would take place. Director Hisayuki Toriumi worried that if the show took place too far in the future, it would lose all grounding in reality and yet they wanted to utilize more science fiction elements. So the choice was made for 2001 (in respect to Kubrick's film of the same name). Wisely they decided to shy away from using lasers and such for many of the weapons, and went for the tried and true hair-singing explosions of missiles and explosives because they are more visually interesting. This gave the animators a chance to bombard the audience with a constant barrage of explosions

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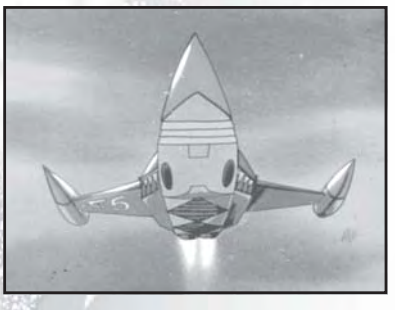
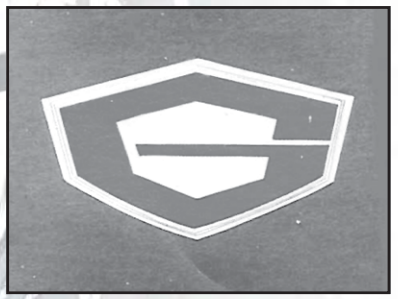
## SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: OVERVIEW (Continued)





in most episodes, creating much mayhem and excitement. While it was the intent of the creators to make sure the science in the show was technologically feasible, this is where they failed most miserably. The *Gatchaman*'s transforming vehicles alone lay waste to this idea. Akira Kosumi, science consultant on the show, once postulated that Nambu may have been aided by aliens that had a grudge against Galactor, but this was never mentioned in the series itself.

The word "Gatchaman" itself has no meaning. It was a word made up to replace the pedestrian Birdman, which was the series' original title, when promoters felt it needed a flashier name. Gatchaman was ultimately selected because it sounded cool. The series was instantly popular on its release due to its advanced animation and exciting story (even superior to Japanese anime released at that time). Because of this instant success, the initial run of 53 episodes was anted up to 105 and the show's creators had a new challenge in expanding the story enough to continue it. Since the first season mostly focused on Galactor's schemes and Gatchaman trying to stop them, they realized they had a whole mother lode of untapped potential left to explore by expanding the background and detail of the characters and the organizations they worked for. *Gatchaman* was the early breeding ground for some of the biggest creators in anime. Character designers Yoshitaka Amano (*Vampire Hunter D*, *Angel's Egg* and *Final Fantasy*) and Akemi Takada (*Kimagure Orange Road*, *Patlabor*, *Maison Ikkoku* and *Urusei Yatsura*) had their start on *Gatchaman* – Yoshitaka while he was still a teenager. Mechanical designer Kunio Okawara would move on to other projects such as *Gundam*, *Dougram* and *Xabungle*. Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*, *Angel's Egg* and *Patlabor*) worked on *Gatchaman F* before making a stronger impression on Rumiko Takahashi's *Urusei Yatsura* series.

Now nostalgia can make you see things with rose-coloured glasses, but I am of the opinion that *Gatchaman* is one of the best anime series ever. Yes, it's starting to show its age, and yes, it is far from perfect. And yet by being so influential and long lasting, it still shows the strength that made it that way in the first place. While the animation was superior to anything at the time it was released (and even for years afterwards – the sequels don't look nearly as good), the quality of the animation for the first 20 episodes or so is not nearly as good as the ones that follow. The colours are muted and dark – especially when compared to anime from the last 5-6 years. The story in the beginning wasn't nearly as strong either, falling into the "monster of the week" syndrome that plagues many shows. With the emphasis on Gatchaman using their powers and weapons only in defence also lead to rather predictable outcomes – either Red Impulse would save the day, or the Firebird was used to solve the dilemma. Once these kinks were worked out however, things got really good.

The characters are well defined and realistic – even in the designs they look like normal (if at times, somewhat ugly) people. The main characters are a lot less stereotypical and more fleshed out than our character descriptions would imply. Keep in mind also that by being the first to have these "types" that they hadn't yet become a cliché. As stated before, the team concept and characters in *Gatchaman* were highly influential.

The overall story of the series is excellent. There is padding of course – impossible not to with the number of episodes produced – but the mystery of Katse as well as Joe's illness and the episodes that focus on these are some of the most interesting and exciting stories I have seen. The tight continuity also adds much to the series appeal. Also of note is the excellent score by Bob Sakuma (the CDs are reviewed elsewhere in this issue). That he was able to create so many signature themes and motifs based on the melody of the theme song really impresses me. While the style is a little dated now, it still sounds really good (love the "chukka-chukka" wah-guitar work).

Even with the release of *Battle of the Planets* by Rhino this year possibly containing the original episodes, it seems highly unlikely that the complete series will be released in its entirety in North America (The series has been released in Japan on DVD). As great as many people think this series is, I don't know if it will have as much of an impact on the younger generation of fans – fans that are used to flashier and more colourful animation. If anything we have mentioned here piques your curiosity, you should check the show out. If you are only familiar with the English adaptations of *Gatchaman*, you should definitely try to see what you have been missing (more on that next issue).

| Designs: **4** | Animation: **3.5** | Soundtrack: **4** | Story: **3** | Translation: **—** | Average: **3.5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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# SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: CHARACTER PROFILES

## Gatchaman

Although throughout the first series, Berg Katse often refers to Ken as "Gatchaman" – when we use it in the article, we are referring to the quintet as a whole. Each member wears a **special bracelet** that controls their transformations from civilian guise to "Bird Styles" (the heat and cold resistant costumes they wear – this also applies to the changes in their personal vehicles). The bracelets are voice-activated and are used for communication as well. When needed, the bracelet can be used to send out their uniquely coded messages when struck against a hard surface. The **Bird Style suits** are small calibre bullet-proofed and the wings enable the members to perform tall leaps in a single bound as well as glide short distances. Using 3-5 members, they can stand on each others shoulders and form a pyramid to use the **"Whirlwind Fighter"** – they rotate at a high speed which creates a vortex that can smash through steel, bowl over Galactor Goons and carry the team members up quite a distance.

## Galactor

Galactor is an elite terrorist organization headed by Sosai X and run by Berg Katse. Their ultimate aim is to dismantle the Mantle Project in what Katse believes will result in world domination. For most of the first series, Gatchaman are pre-occupied with searching out the location of Galactor's secret motherbase to put an end to the terrorists, unending blackmail. Galactor spends a lot of time and energy protecting its secrets. To achieve these goals, Galactor creates new **monster-mechs** – courtesy of Galactor scientist **Dr. Ogawara** – to cause havoc and destruction.

## ISO (International Science Organization)

The International Science Organization (ISO) is developing forms of non-pollutant energy, such as atomic energy, through the Mantle Project. The chief of the ISO is Director Anderson. Gatchaman is one of ISO's projects under Dr. Nambu's control, to protect the developing Mantle Project from Galactor's schemes. Aware of Galactor's impending threat for many years, Nambu has been training Gatchaman, a team of youngsters in the use of their abilities defending the Earth. ISO supplies the team with their weapons, vehicles and the Crescent Coral Reef Base, a base of operations for the Science Ninjas.

## G-1: Eagle Ken (Ken Washio)

The de facto leader of Gatchaman and quite often referred to as "the white shadow". Ken is a test pilot who lost his father at 4 and his mother at 11. Unknown to Ken however is that his father hadn't died but "disappeared" on a mission and is in actuality, Red Impulse. While displaying admirable traits as a leader, he is prone to fits of rage that make him more of a loose cannon than Joe. As the series progresses he becomes even more cold and distant to those around him. Ken has an obsession with confronting Katse in a cat and mouse chase, sometimes freaking out the leader of Galactor with his signature birdcall (it's the *Gatchaman* theme!). Ken has no time for women in his life preferring to lead the life of a loner with the fate of the world resting on his shoulders. His weapons of choice are the boomerang (Bird-rang), Cutting Saucer (Bird Saucer) and the G-Fencer sword. Ken pilots the G1, is a test pilot for ISO and delivers mail to the small islands off of Japan in his Cessna. Age: 18; Height: 180 cm; Weight: 60 kg; Voice actor: Katsuji Mori.

## G-2: Condor Joe (George "Joe" Asakura)

You won't find too many women who watch this show that aren't swayed by the dangerous sex appeal that Joe oozes from his pores. And why not? All the ladies he meets fall for him. Unfortunately for him, they always seem to meet an untimely demise and are agents for Galactor. This probably only adds to his appeal. Joe has a deep hatred towards Galactor because his parents were once their agents and were murdered before him after they defected (ooh, a tragic past!). Towards the end of the first series, Joe suffers from double vision and an aversion to light due to shrapnel lodged in his brain which is slowly killing him. He commits the ultimate sacrifice at the end of *Gatchaman*, only to return in II as a significantly changed man. Joe is the weapons nut (a real "shoot first, ask questions later" kind of guy) and an ace driver – although he often has bad luck when it comes to cars (saves puppy, gets hit by car; hits boy with car; hits old lady with car; falls from sky, gets hit by car). His equipment stays basically the same for all the series (with slight variations): the feather shuriken and his Air Gun (which in the first series has attachments such as a blowtorch, drill bits and a cable-firing device). He drives the G2 and is a racer in his spare time. Age: 18; Height: 185 cm; Weight: 60 kg; Voice Actor: Isao Sasaki.

Dr. Ogawara and one of his creation, the Iscander Mecha

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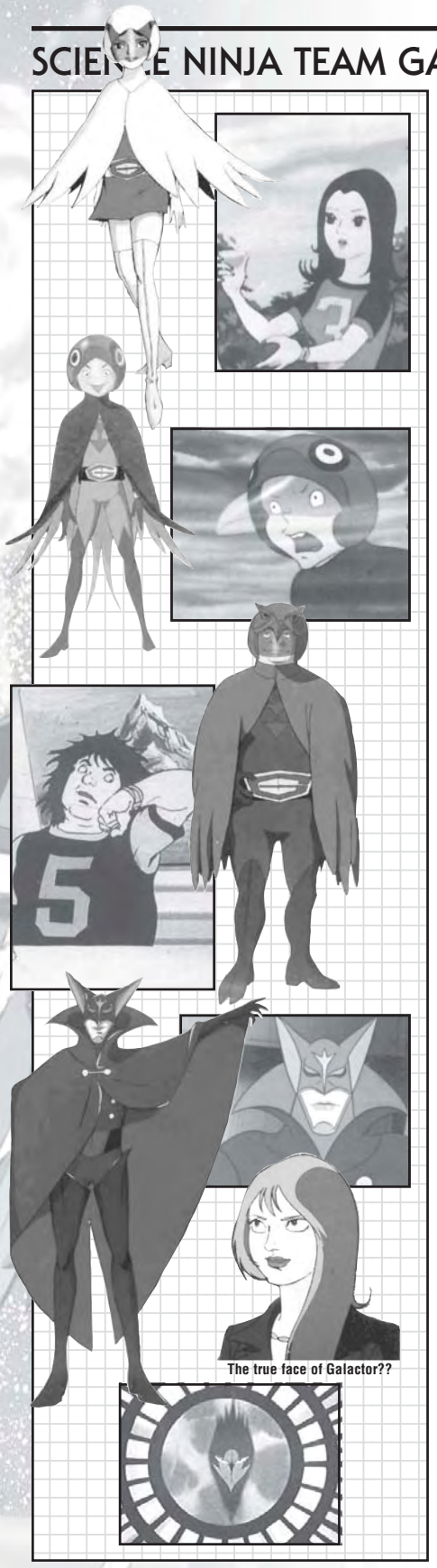
## SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: CHARACTER PROFILES (Continued)




### G-3: Swan Jun (Jun)

Jun is the techno-savvy member of the team. Her ability to hot-wire electronics (getting the team out of tight places) and blow Galactor bases and mecha to smithereens with explosives makes her an integral part of the team. Being an orphan as well, Jun adopts Jinpei as her younger brother, but also acts as a sister/mother to the others. She has obvious feelings for Ken, but he is completely unaware of them – so she says nothing. She runs the Snack J, a restaurant where the team often hang out during their down time. Jun often plays the diplomat when there is strife between Ken and Joe, but will on occasion put in her two-cents worth when things get out of hand. While not as reckless as Ken and Joe, she is a more than capable fighter with the ability to get herself out of jams on her own. She uses the explosive yo-yo, Aurora Ribbon (similar to the ones in gymnastics) and the Elenet stun ray armband. She drives the G3. Age: 16; Height: 160 cm; Weight: 45 kg; Voice Actor: Kazuko Sugiyama.

### G-4: Swallow Jinpei (Jinpei)

Ten year-old Jinpei is Jun's would-be adopted brother. As the youngest member of the team, he has a lot to raise his estimation in the eyes of the others – more often than not he gets himself involved in a situation where he needs outside help. Despite being resourceful and fairly clever, the others tend to poke fun at him or not take him that seriously. Some believe that he may be a child of the Jupiter Ninja Clan as he was found at the bottom of Mt. Jupiter. His weapons are the bolo (with explosives), the Rebound Ball and the Swallow Top (like a top and string). He pilots the all terrain G4. Age: 10; Height: 120 cm; Weight: 30 kg; Voice Actor: Yoku Shioya.

### G-5: Great Horned Owl Ryu (Ryu Nakanishi)

A country bumpkin who feels the most inadequate of the Science Ninja Team, Ryu is gentle and at odds with the work necessary to defend the Earth. These self-perceived shortcomings lead him to be in conflict with Joe quite often and he quits the team several times as a result. He is the only member of the team with a living family, and he has to keep his occupation a secret from them in order to protect them. This also causes him inner turmoil. Ryu and Jinpei are quite often poking fun at each other and the others providing some much-needed comic relief in the series. At the age of 13, he saved Nambu's life and as a reward, Ryu was offered the chance to join Gatchaman. As the pilot of the God-Phoenix, Ryu is often relegated to the role of baby-sitter while the others go kick some Galactor butt – not that he doesn't pull his own considerable weight when he does join in on the fun. Usually he relies on his own brute strength in a fight, but he does occasionally use an Air Gun, the Gripper (a football shaped wad of something) and the Owl Sickle. Age: 17; Height: 170 cm; Weight: 80 kg; Voice Actor: Shingo Kanemoto.

### Berg Katse

One of the coolest and most ridiculous villains ever in the history of anime. As the main person behind Galactor's nefarious schemes, Gatchaman are constantly confronting their foe in just about every episode, but he always manages to escape them (quite the coward, as it turns out). For most of the series Gatchaman and Katse are always trying to find out the identity behind their respective masks. The mystery is thrown a tasty morsel when Ken manages to pull off Katse's mask and all we can see is a mane of long flowing blond hair before Sosai X intervenes. For a short while the team believes that Katse may be a woman. Nambu later discovers that Katse is, in fact, a mutant hermaphrodite created by Sosai X, when he first arrived on Earth, from the DNA of fraternal twins that fluctuates between the sexes. Although coming across as incredibly dumb at times, his IQ is 280 (the same as two people combined – maybe the lapses of stupidity can be blamed on his erratic body changes). He is incredibly skilled in the art of disguise and illusion and this ability borders on the arcane. Arrogant to a fault, Katse is partly tragic, mostly vicious and cruel, with hints of class and at times extremely humourous. It's true that they don't make them like they used to. Voice actor: Mikio Terajima.

### Sosai X (Z)

An alien from the planet Selectro, Sosai X is the main force behind Galactor and created both Berg Katse and Gel Sadra (II) to lead his forces on his planned mission for the destruction of Earth. Seemingly omnipotent and indestructible – we never really get to see his true form (the way in which he represents himself changes in each version of the series) – he is nonetheless destroyed at the end of *Gatchaman II*. Being alien and so awe-inspir-

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# SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN: CHARACTER PROFILES (Continued)

ingly powerful, he is able to regenerate from the remains and christens himself "Z". Some believe his true form is the gold pillar seen at the end of the first series and the movie. Is he creature, machine or energy being? Emotionally unstable, he treats his commanders with a modicum of contempt and suffers failure badly. However, he does come to the aid of his creations when capture or death is imminent. Voice Actor: Nobuo Tanaka.

## Dr. Kozaburo Nambu

A brilliant scientist who trained the members of the Gatchaman team from childhood. He is the one usually responsible for discovering the secrets of Galactor's schemes and weapons; and giving orders and plans of attack to the team. He himself is quite often a target due to his involvement with the Mantle Project – a way to create an unlimited, pollution free source of energy. He is also a highly respected member of ISO. Age: 48; Voice actor: Toru Ohhira.

## Red Impulse

His real name is Kentaro Washio (hey, that would make Ken "Junior") and he faked his death years earlier to go undercover on a secret mission while entrusting his only son, Ken, to Dr. Nambu's care. The Red Impulse Squadron was in fact a precursor to Gatchaman, formed by Nambu to counteract Galactor's every move. Red Impulse is a somewhat cold, ruthless and determined man. In the early episodes of *Gatchaman*, Red Impulse and his squadron always arrive in time to get Gatchaman's fat out of the frying pan – but only earning the distrust of the Science Ninjas. This constant help irks Ken and a rivalry ensues between the two – a rivalry that continues up until the moment that Red Impulse finally reveals himself to Ken as the father he never knew – before he sacrifices his life to hinder Galactor's grand scheme of worldly destruction. He has two partners, Masaki and Oniishi; and the trio form the Red Impulse Squadron. Voice actor: Hisayoshi Yoshizawa.

## Galactor Soldiers

These generally ineffective and cowardly soldiers are the spineless backbone of the Galactor organization (they also seem absolutely incapable of any kind of teamwork). These men are gathered from all the finest institutions of the world – namely prisons, mental hospitals and slums. This makes them glad to work for anybody who would free them from dreary conditions, but doesn't inspire loyalty when things get down to the crunch – particularly when the organization is considered more important than the individual's life. The smarter ones get to pilot the mecha and wear even more ridiculous looking costumes than the regular ones.

## Blackbirds

An elite ninja team of Galactor agents that can actually hold their own against Gatchaman. Unlike regular Galactor agents, these men are capable of working together and this makes them much more formidable opponents. Their fighting ability and costumes are very similar to Gatchaman's as well, but in a much cooler, darker looking way. Despite being favourite re-occurring antagonists, they only show up in a handful of episodes.

## Devil Stars

It turns out Galactor are equal opportunity employers. This team of female assassins causes more than a few problems for the team – but mostly for Joe. Lead by Berg Katse in his female form ("Galactor Onna Taicho" or Galactor Woman Captain – Zoltar's sister in *BOTP*), their mode of transport (and where they earned their nickname since they are never named in the show) is also Katse's get-away vehicle in most episodes.

With all the various incarnations, we are providing a chart showing the names used for each version of Gatchaman. For the sake of consistency, we are sticking with the Japanese names for the characters (and our preferred English spellings) for the bulk of the article – although, as an example, when mentioned in the context of *BOTP*, it's Tiny that eats space burgers, not Ryu.

| GATCHAMAN | BATTLE OF THE PLANETS | G-FORCE | EAGLE RIDERS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ken | Mark | Ace Goodheart | Hunter Harris |
| Joe | Jason | Dirk Daring | Joe Thax |
| Jun | Princess | Agatha Jun | Kelly Jenar |
| Jinpei | Keyop | PeeWee | Micky Dougan |
| Ryu | Tiny Harper | Hootie | Ollie Keeawanl |
| Berg Katse | Zoltar (Mala and Agent S-9 in female form) | Galactor | N/A |
| Gel Sadra | N/A | N/A | Mallanox |
| Count Egobossler | N/A | N/A | Happyboy |
| Sosai X (Z) | Luminous One | Computor | Cybercon |
| Galactor | Spectra | ? | Vorak |
| Nambu | Security Chief Anderson | Prof. B. Brighthead | Dr. Thaddeus Keane |
| Red Impulse | Colonel Cronos | Red Ranger (?) | N/A |
| Director Anderson | President Kane | ? | ? |
| Gatchaman | G-Force | G-Force (?) | ? |

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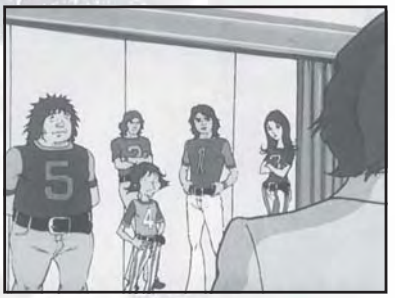
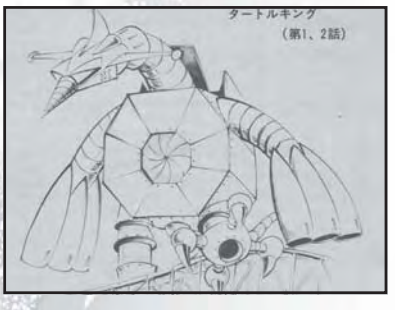
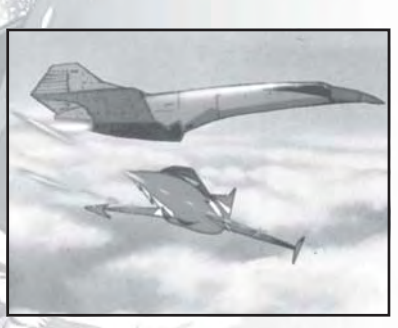
Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

## GATCHAMAN: SYNOPSIS

⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠





The standard episode of *Gatchaman* tends to follow a familiar pattern: monster-mech arrives, Gatchaman loses first round against monster-mech, Gatchaman retreats to rethink strategy, Gatchaman returns to be victorious over the monster-mech. To avoid this monotony that is de rigueur of battle anime, we present to you, dear reader, highlights of the continuing story and its more interesting subplots:

Rising from the water like Godzilla, a humongous turtle-shaped mecha monster crashes through and steals the Mantle Project's store of uranium (episode #1). This unknown threat causes the ISO directors to panic, save for Dr. Nambu, the head of the Japanese branch. A terrorist organization calling itself Galactor, Nambu claims, has for many years planned for world conquest and has finally made its first overt move. But there is no reason to fear, for Dr. Nambu – who has known of this for quite some time – has prepared a team of five young people to counter Galactor's attacks: Gatchaman, the Science Ninja Team.

Aboard the God Phoenix on their first mission, Gatchaman pursue the monster-mecha, the Turtle King. When faced with certain doom, they are impelled to use an untested weapon, The Firebird, which could possibly lead them to a fiery death. In the end, it succeeds and they escape.

The Red Impulse make their entrance (#5), often clashing with Gatchaman's methods. They will make a couple more auxiliary appearances. The mysterious leader of Galactor, Berg Katse, makes a showy, first public appearance (#7) as a skull-faced ghost pilot who disrupts a major air show.

Ken flies to a meeting with Dr. Nambu when he crosses paths with Red Impulse (#11). Liking a challenge they do a Top Gun act against each other. Red Impulse lectures Ken, telling him he's a decent pilot but not good enough. He slips past Ken who wishes he had that calibre of skill.

During a battle with a giant mole mecha (#20) a piece of shrapnel is embedded in Joe's brain. Attempts to remove it prove unsuccessful until a later rematch, when the God Phoenix and its occupants are tossed about that the shrapnel is finally dislodged. But that's just the beginning of Joe's troubles…

The alien mastermind behind Galactor, Sosai X makes his appearance (#21). Ken goes to visit a group of ISO scientists, arriving just in time to encounter a group of Galactor Bird Ninjas, the Blackbirds (#24). Ken defeats the Blackbirds, but it proves more difficult than usual. The sinister female Galactor Captain makes her debut (#29) as the sponsor of a cybernetic kickboxer. While driving the professor to the ISO headquarters after a conference, Joe tussles with a Galactic Devil Star (#31). This is the first of several assassination attempts on Nambu's life. The encounter causes Joe to flashback to the deaths of his parents, murdered by a masked assassin like the Devil Star. Later, he arrives late for battle, but in time to clash with one Devil Star whose death will rise up to haunt him later.

After barely escaping a disastrous skirmish, Gatchaman is broken and demoralized. The Red Impulse squad arrives to kick the team back into shape (#44). During this retraining session, Ken overcomes the "red out" he suffered earlier, nearly crashing his plane. Afterwards, Dr. Nambu admits that Ken's father is alive, and once their next mission is completed, Ken will be able to meet him. Through this mission with the leader of Red Impulse (#52), Ken discovers more about his past.

Now, Galactor has initiated the V-2 plan, a rocket that will destroy the Van Allen Belt and unleash massive natural disasters upon the planet. With the help of the Red Impulse Squadron, Gatchaman infiltrate the Galactor base (#53). Unfortunately, in order to use the rocket to stop the chain reaction, someone must fly it to certain death. Ken and Red Impulse battle over the honour until Ken learns the truth: Red Impulse is his long lost father! With fatherly affection, Red Impulse beats the tar out of his son and departs aboard the V-2. The Earth is saved, but at a cost. Ken is understandably angry about his father's death, but his obsession with revenge causes him to make nearly fatal mistakes (#54-57).

ISO's Mantle Project has been steadily progressing, and a Jellyfish mecha attacks a city where the project is working wonders, and when Gatchaman arrive on the scene they are tricked into using the Firebird effect. Katse releases a device that destroys the God Phoenix (#67). Finally, a new God Phoenix and assorted vehicles are built, and their personal vehicles now have each been outfitted with powerful weaponry.

There are reports of Abominable Snowman sightings in the Himalayans (#71). Jinpei goes to investigate. He encounters Galactor lackeys who invite him to join the organization as a servant to Berg Katse. Inside the base,

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## GATCHAMAN: SYNOPSIS (Continued)

he signals for help before sneaking aboard the Snowman mecha and smashing through the floor at Katse's feet. When the God Phoenix comes crashing into the chamber, Katse runs for safety as Jinpei's bolo come flying out of the Snowman's eyes. Katse's ankle twists, and he falls, helpless. Katse whimpers in terror and tries to back up against the wall as Ken approaches with a truly nasty smile on his face. Katse's mask is ripped off for a teasing glimpse of long blonde hair before Sosai X interferes – appearing before the Science Ninjas for the first time – and whisks Katse off to safety.

Late for a team rendez-vous, Joe becomes the first to taste the Galactor's new Mechanizer ray, a device that can reverse the transmutation process which painfully knocks him out of Bird-Style (#76). He must warn the others before they encounter the same fate. Later, Joe starts having nightmares, flashbacks and violent reactions to bright lights. During an undersea mission (#78), Ken forces him to face his affliction, and Joe rediscovers the truth about his parents – He tells Ken about his parents' death and how the Devil Star assassin had told him to curse his father for daring to leave Galactor. He returns to his old childhood home on BC Island on the anniversary of his parents' deaths (#81). Unfortunately, his resemblance to his father attracts Katse's attention, and the leader orders his men not to let Joe off the island. The son of Giuseppe Asakura was supposed to have died with the rest of the family, and the governor of the island assures him that George Asakura did die – a death verified by a genuine doctor, Dr. Nambu! In the meantime, Joe has met Father Alan, his childhood friend, and discovers that the Devil Star he'd killed (back in #31) was Alan's fiancée.

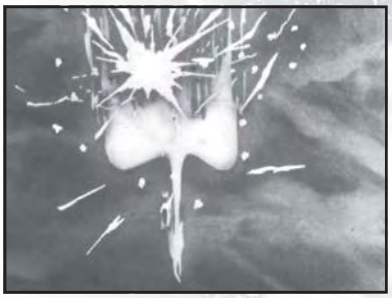
Dr. Nambu discovers key information concerning Berg Katse's early life: that Katse had changed schools every year and that he might be a woman. Nambu also finds two men who know of Katse's past, and it's up to Gatchaman to find and question them. But after an encounter with the Blackbirds leaves their witnesses dead (#88), the science ninjas arrive too late to interview Katse's old teacher. Katse has murdered him. To add injury to insult, Galactor finally invades the Crescent Coral and it is utterly destroyed.

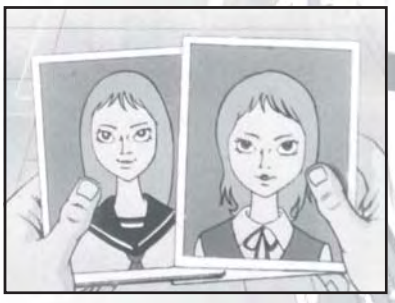
Joe suffers a sudden blindness attack triggered by bright lights (#98). This has caused a relapse in his illness, and this time he knows there is something horribly wrong. Dr. Nambu sends him on a special mission alone, but only Ken's appearance at the right time prevents a disaster. Aided by an accidental blow to the head, Joe's illness gets much worse (#99). As the team infiltrate Galactor's Beta base, his vision blurs, his fighting falters, and he falls out of the Whirlwind Fighter twice. He is left behind in the God Phoenix to rest (and feeling impotent), but winds up the only one left to rescue his friends.

Joe goes to an unlicensed doctor for a complete physical (#102), wanting to find out what's wrong with him, then tells him to come back later for the results. As he leaves, he just misses the arrival of the female Galactor Captain. Unaware of what is transpiring elsewhere, Dr. Nambu continues his research. He has found the records of a student who is sometimes a male student, sometimes a female. Now he knows the truth. But just then, his home is attacked by a Galactor monster-mech, and he is taken prisoner. Joe arrives back to the doctor's office to spot the sinister woman leaving. Changing to Bird Style, he follows her, where she heads into the monster-mech that kidnapped Nambu.

Dr. Nambu awakens to find himself facing Berg Katse. He tells Katse that he knows what he is. The two are interrupted by Joe breaking in and attacking Galactor soldiers. But Katse is prepared for such an attack. He lures Joe in where he can shoot him with the Mechanizer, knocking him unconscious and revealing his true identity for all to see. Not wanting to take chances, Katse orders his soldiers to kill Joe on the spot. But they are stopped by the timely arrival of Gatchaman, who quickly mop up the Galactor goons. Refusing to give up, Katse prepares to use the Mechanizer again. But Joe awakens and fires into the Mechanizer's barrel, jamming it, just as Katse fires. This causes the weapon to explode, ripping off Katse's mask and sending him flying against the wall.

Joe tries to turn Katse's face toward the others, but Nambu tells Joe to stop. He explains that Katse is a mutant, combining male and female in a single body. As a side effect, Katse also became emotionally warped by being forced to flee from school to school, home to home, and by a fluid sexual identity. Katse laughs, in both a male and a female voice, and turns his/her freakish face toward them, deliberately shifting it from male to female. "Are you happy, now that you know what I am? Are you satisfied? Alone of all the world, I am the one chosen by my god – Sosai X!" X appears at this point, and reveals that the Earth is destined to be destroyed, and on that day, he will need Katse. Then he vanishes, and Katse flees.





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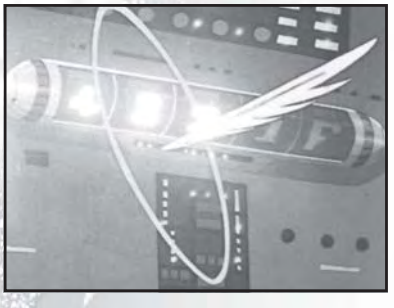
## GATCHAMAN: SYNOPSIS (Continued)



Now that Joe's identity has been revealed, a Galactor squad soon tracks him, captures him and takes him aboard their latest mecha for an interrogation by Katse (#103). After a brutal battle, Joe escapes from the mecha by skydiving 3,000 feet in Birdstyle and nearly getting hit by a car. A local doctor diagnoses Joe as having a fatal head injury brought on by aggravating his old wounds and gives him at most ten days to live.

Of late, there have been earthquakes of increasing severity. Nambu suspects that a Galactor mecha spotted underwater may be involved, and dispatches the team – but orders Joe to remain behind for an examination. Joe can't bear spending his last days in a hospital while his teammates are risking their lives against Galactor. He heads for Cross Karakorum alone, having heard it mentioned by Katse earlier, but is discovered when he gets there. He tries calling Ken on his bracelet, but the Galactors shoot it off, changing him out of costume. He takes them out, but an endless swarm finally downs him.

Nambu realizes Galactor is planning something bigger (#104). If the explosions keep up, the Earth will surely be destroyed. The Science Ninja Team receives a transmission from Joe's bracelet, but thinking it may be a trap, head out with caution. X receives a report that Selectro has suddenly disappeared, and is overwhelmed by it. With no ambition left, X vows to blow up the Earth. Katse panics at this change in plans, but X assures him it was just a figure of speech. As soon as Katse is out of earshot, he laughs.

Unconscious and near death, Joe is brought before Katse again. He wants him alive to use as a hostage, and decides to show him the central device for the Black Hole Operation, telling him that it has the capacity to blow up the Earth. Joe attacks, but the shuriken misses Katse and goes into the mechanism of the device. The God Phoenix arrives. Gatchaman meet the two surviving members of Red Impulse, Masaki and the mute Oniishi. They, it turns out, were the ones who sent the message on Joe's bracelet. Masaki tells the team that Joe has been captured, and try to take them to him, but Katse has somehow switched the rooms on them, and they enter a deathtrap. Both Masaki and Oniishi are killed. Gatchaman barely get out using explosives, and Ken vows not to let the Red Impulse squad's death be in vain.

Director Anderson asks Nambu what they can tell the people of the world. Nambu begs him not to release the truth – it would cause a panic, and result in mass surrender to Galactor. Galactor wants to rule the Earth, and they live here too – they must be bluffing. He asks Anderson to believe in Gatchaman, and wait.

Finally, after a long search, Jun discovers Joe, who has made an agonizing trek up the stairs to the entrance (#105). She uses the bracelet to call the others, but the Galactors now know her position. They surround the area and begin to close in as the five Science Ninjas unite for the last time. But Joe dies and is laid to rest. Grief stricken Ken screams at the Galactor goons that they have no time for them and in embarrassed confusion, the guards let the science ninjas head for the base where they meet up with Berg Katse. Ken demands that Katse stop the Black Hole Operation. He begins to beat Katse brutally – until Sosai X announces that in 30 minutes a neutron reaction will occur, and the Earth will vanish. Katse once again whines that was not the plan; X was to give the Earth to him. "I will give it to you... shattered to pieces, as dust in space!" X explains he was sent to Earth, but since his world in Andromeda has vanished, this planet has become useless. Katse runs at the screen, screaming, "Why did you make me a mutant for, then? If this is to be my fate, I would rather have been a human..." Then he falls to his knees, weeping by the edge of the lava pit that X's departure has left behind as it shoots into space.

Jun reports that they can't get the machine to stop. Ken suggests throwing in all the bombs, but that doesn't work either. Katse begins to laugh, a broken, hysterical, mad laugh. The machine cannot be stopped because Katse did not put in a failsafe mechanism. "Die! Everyone, everything, die, die!!" With a scream of despair, he leaps into the lava pit, and falls to his death. Ken decides to try to get inside and stop the thing. But Jun stops him, saying that the gears would crush him; if they are going to die, it would be best if they all died together. The four of them wait for death – but suddenly the shuriken Joe had thrown into the mechanism jams it, and it explodes, stopping the Black Hole Operation. The counter reads 0002 – Joe's number. Outside, they note that all the Galactors are dead, but there's no sign of Joe's body...

At a press conference, Nambu answers questions about X and the prospects for peace. Galactor, certainly, has destroyed itself. But the Earth must remain vigilant for there is always darkness lurking in the hearts of men.

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# GATCHAMAN: MECHA FILES: VEHICLES & WEAPONS

## G-1

Type: jet fighter. Chief Weapon: twin laser canon. Top Speed: mach 4. Operational Ceiling: 30 000 m. Located: tail section of God Phoenix. Disguised as: single-engine prop racing plane (Cessna) Notes: G-1, as well as other machines, is made of special plastic composite that alters its shape at a special frequency (3600 Mhz) heard during the "transmute" to Bird Style.

## G-2

Type: Racecar. Chief Weapon: The Condor Machine, a 20mm gatling gun hidden in front of car Top Speed: 1000 km/h. Operational Ceiling: N/A. Located: nose of God Phoenix. Disguised as: 2000 GT-X class stock car modeled after 70s era Nissan Skyline Sport Edition) Notes: powered by gas turbine engine. Puncture proof tires.

## G-3

Type: sonic car (motorbike). Chief Weapon: Jun Rockets twin rocket launcher Top Speed: 700 km/h on land, 200 over water. Operational Ceiling: N/A. Located: left float of God Phoenix. Disguised as: 700cc-class motorcycle. Notes: skimmer attachment behind the front wheel for water-skis

## G-4

Type: Helico Buggy. Chief Weapon: small bombs, nets, slingshots, drills, cutter wheels… anything goes. Top Speed: 200 km/h. Operational Ceiling: unknown. Located: right float of God Phoenix. Disguised as: small dune buggy. Notes: most versatile of all them – can operate in air, water, underground, on land surface. Equipped with jet engines and caterpillar treads. Engines and rear wings fold-down for storage.

## God Phoenix

Type: spaceship/hovercraft. Chief Weapon: bird missiles (app. 20), super bird missiles (2), Firebird mode. Only can use when all G-vehicles are aboard. Top Speed: alone 80 knots above water, 40 under water; when assembled mach 5 Operational Ceiling: 30 000m, underwater depth 2000m; heat tolerance limit 3000°C? Handicap: needs all 4 Gs to operate weapons and perform high capacity. Exact mechanics for Firebird mode unknown, but when special generators are pushed into the red zone, the ionization of the air causes the Firebird effect. Jet engines above, but electrical engines power underwater (jet intakes then close). Main cargo carries ap. 200 people. Notes: God Phoenix is the only vehicle that doesn't have a disguised form.

## Red Impulse Fighters

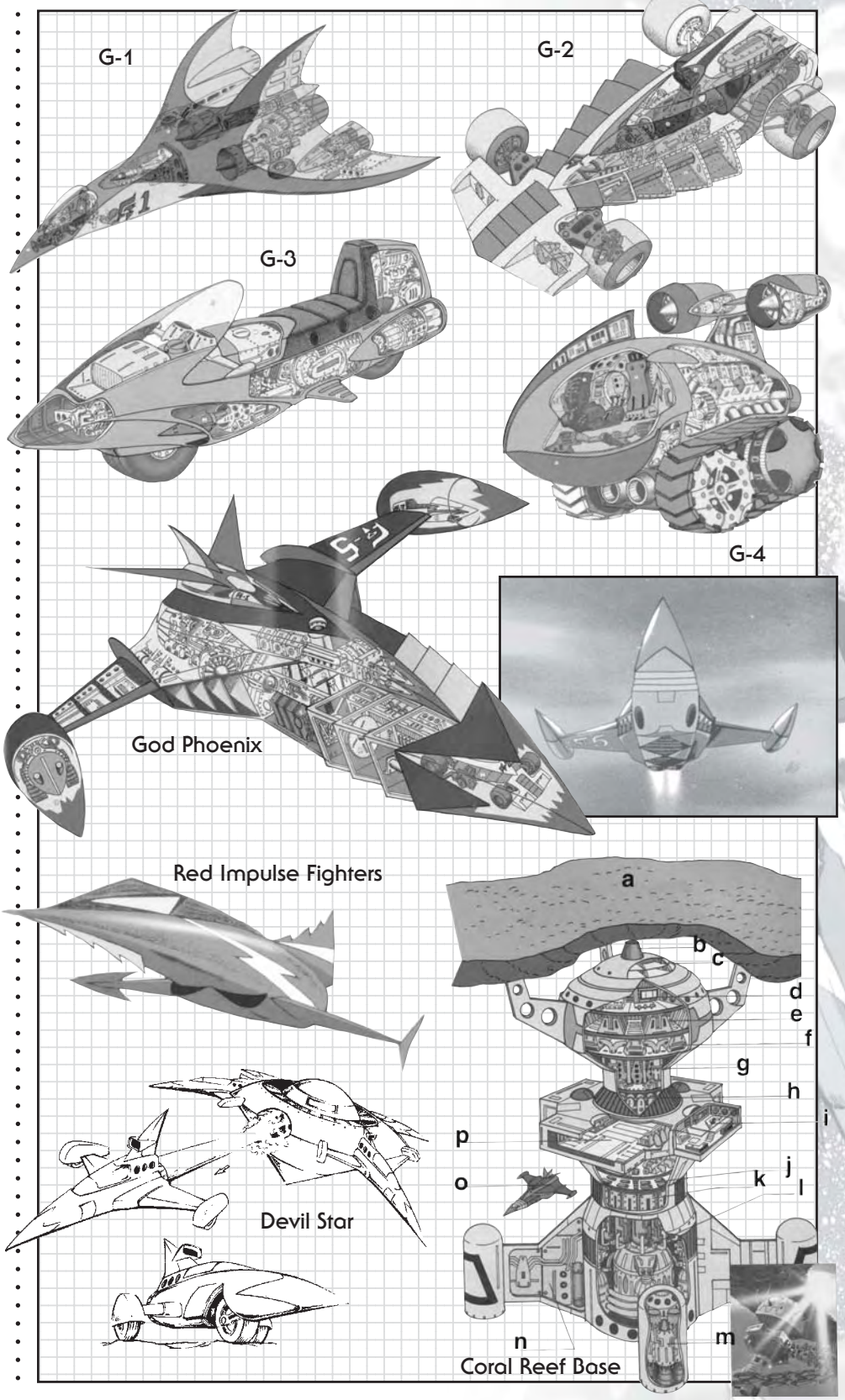
The fighter jet of Red Impulse has a distinctive lightning bolt-shaped canard, making it appear like a preying shark.

## Devil Star

Often used by Berg Katse as an escape vehicle, this mecha contains six flying vehicles, which can detach with individual pilots in an attack formation.

## Crescent Coral Reef Base

This underwater base is the headquarters for Dr. Nambu and the Science Ninja Team. Key: A. Coral Camoflage; B. Radar; C. Observatory; D. Meeting Room; E. Computer Room Level I; F. Computer Room Level II; G. Electrical Room; H. Oxygen Tanks; I. Nambu's Office; J. Gatchaman's Ready Room; K. Refrigerators; L. Power Plant; M. Marine Rocket Engine; N. Generator; O. God Phoenix; P. God Phoenix Hangar.

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# GUNDAM: AN INTRODUCTION

Illustration by Yoshikazu Yasuhiko

"What is *Mobile Suit Gundam* ?" The most obvious part of the answer, the one foremost appearing in your mind, is: *Gundam* is a science-fiction anime show with giant robots. However, if he takes the time to watch a few episodes of *Gundam* , the viewer will start to see that it is much more than just a giant robot show. And it did not become this way by accident. If something was ever planned to be more than what it appeared to be, *Gundam* is it...

*Gundam* 's creator, Yoshiyuki Tomino, was, at the end of the seventies, one of the hottest anime giant robot show writers and directors. Before Tomino, and for the first part of his long career, giant robot shows were always the same: bad Extra (or Inter)-Terrestrials attack the Earth (read "Japan"), killing a genius scientist (who was aware of their arrival) in the process. Then the son, grandson or nephew of the dead scientist, discovering a huge robot in the basement of the scientist's house, uses the machine to get rid of the bad guys. The next 40 or 50 episodes (they had time and money in those days...) are spent foiling the bad guys' often asinine plans and having the robot posing up a storm while using its "special attacks", all this so that the toy company backing the series could sell their merchandising to as many eager kids as possible. Today, the "Ridiculously Flashy Giant Robot" genre has become a nostalgia theme, hence the success of recent series like *Shin Getter Robo* and *Gekiganger III* . However, in the late 1970's, Tomino's early days, it was a intellectual straight jacket he could not wait to shake off. He toiled for nearly ten years before his chance to totally do so finally arrived (he had already shrugged it off a bit with a series titled *Space Runaway Ideon* ). The then revolutionary concept of *Mobile Suit Gundam* ( *Kidô Senshi Gundam* ) was the result of him reading Robert Heinlein's famous *Starship Troopers* novel, which depicted a mechanized space war in a very realistic setting. Basically, the concept Tomino wanted to put forth in his new series was to make it believable to the viewer, both visually and emotionally, so that he or she would care about what happened.

To do so, Tomino first worked on the mechanical aspect of the show. To replace the gaudy robots and the ridiculous monsters, Tomino, with the help of mechanical designer Kunio Okawara, created the Mobile Suits or MS, 18 meter tall humanoid machines that looked mechanically realistic (within certain limits, of course. Those things still had to look cool...), functioned following the laws of physics as much as possible (without removing the science-fiction feel) and be believable as a military implement, a trait that was to become a major part of the *Gundam* saga. Then Tomino worked on the story and its political background. What he wanted to do was a war story making the viewer believe that the events he was watching could happen in our reality, with characters who could be real people and all this even if it was only an anime. To do this, Tomino first eliminated from his series' setting the famous "Good Against Evil" principle that had been at the core of the preceding shows (still predominant in much of the North American shows, animated or otherwise) and created *Gundam* 's characters with flaws and qualities: for example, Amuro Rey, the Gundam's pilot and the series' hero, is also an ill-tempered, ill-mannered little brat who looks as ordinary as possible, while Char Aznable, Amuro's bitter enemy, is a good looking, honorable and basically decent man. In short, the characters in *Gundam* are just human beings and that was what made Tomino's creation so special: the portrayal of humanity as it really is. What we witness in *Gundam* is a series of apocalyptic conflicts (the One Year War in *Mobile Suit Gundam* killed four BILLION people in its first minutes...) provoked and fought by humans, with no evil extra-terrestrials involved in any way. Even if this conflict rages between Earth and its orbiting space colonies in a science-fiction (closer to anticipation, in our opinion) setting, the dynamic of war is and will always stay the same: people kill other people because they think differently or want different things and, ultimately, the human race is responsible for all its mistakes and horrible deeds...

Is *Mobile Suit Gundam* for everybody? We sincerely believe so. The kids will love the big robots and the action, while the more advanced viewer, teenage or adult, even if he or she ( *Gundam* is neither a boy's or girl's show, it can be watched by anybody) does not enjoy the action and the robots that much, will certainly enjoy the show's complex story and background, full of surprising turn of events and romantic relationships. We also believe that *Gundam* can teach children about the horrors of war and that parents should watch the show with them to explain some of the events so that their child really does understand what is happening and why. *Pokemon* is fun, but war is more anchored in reality than a bunch of electrical critters fighting it out to give a few extra points to their ten year-old masters...

As for violence, the message in *Gundam* is this: War is carnage and we should refuse to glorify it in any way by showing it prettier than it is. Someone dying is always a tragedy and although careful about not being gory about it, *Gundam* shows war and death as the emotional torment they really are: the mourning and anger resulting from a friend or lover being wiped out of existence in a seemingly unimportant scuffle or a freak accident, a huge colony cylinder, with its entire population having been gassed, being crashed on Earth as a doomsday weapon, families being violently torn apart by hatred and ideology, etc. Yes, *Gundam* is violent, both physically and psychologically, but no more so than real life is and it is our responsibility to change this reality if we don't like it...

In 1999, Bandai chose for their introduction of *Gundam* to the North American TV market, the series that is, in the more recent part of the saga, the most representative of what *Mobile Suit Gundam* really is: *Mobile Suit Gundam Wing* . The show, which aired both on US and Canadian TV, met with tremendous success and created an important *Gundam* fan base in North America. However, as good and successful as *Gundam Wing* is, it is only one part of the huge saga Yoshiyuki Tomino created back in 1978. Moreover, it has its own original timeline, named A.C or After Colony, while Tomino's original *Gundam* saga (and all the ones he did, up to *Turn A* ) takes place in the U.C or Universal Century, a rather different setting from *Wing*.

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# GUNDAM: AN INTRODUCTION (Continued)

*Mobile Suit Gundam* takes place in U.C 0079 (U.C 0001 is situated somewhere around 2040 A.D), nearly a century after the moving of the majority of humanity into the space colonies, known as "Sides". At the beginning of *Mobile Suit Gundam* , there are seven Sides, all established at various Lagrange points around the Earth and Moon. Of all the Sides, Side 3 is the most remote, located on the far side of the Moon. In 0054, a young politician, named Jion Zum Daikun, declared Side 3 independent. Of course, the Federation (Earth United Government) was not about to let the colonies escape its control and started to put some pressure on their governments. Things went from bad to worse and, in U.C 0079, Side 3, now the Archduchy of Jion, led by Giren Zavi, declares war. Thanks to their recently developed, gigantic humanoid war machines named Mobile Suits, Jion wins the first rounds of the conflict. However, the Federation later puts into service their own MSs, the most powerful being the RX-78-2 Gundam, piloted by sixteen year-old Amuro Rey. Amuro's nemesis on the Jion side is Char Aznable, the son of the late Jion Daikun. Both of them being endowed with Newtype powers (a kind of sixth sense brought on by living in space), Amuro and Char will fight their personal war amidst the carnage, while the Federation crushes the Jion Archduchy and wins the war, thanks to the Gundam and the courageous crew of the Mobile Suit Carrier Pegasus...

Tomino continued his saga in 1985 with *Zeta Gundam* , where Char Aznable, under the name Quattro Bagina, has become the leader of the AEUG (Anti Earth United Government) and has enlisted the help of the ex-Pegasus' crew, including Amuro Rey (who only appears for a few episodes). In *Zeta Gundam* , Camille Vidan, a powerful Newtype, is the Gundam pilot. Tomino followed the success of *Zeta* with *Gundam ZZ* (Double Zeta) in 1986. This series continues where *Zeta* ended and recounts the adventures of Judo Ashita, the ZZ Gundam pilot, and the Gundam team as they fight against the Axis Neo-Jion forces, led by Haman Khan. The series had a somewhat parody feel to it and did not meet with the same success as *Zeta* . Char Aznable had not appeared in *Gundam ZZ* simply because Tomino had bigger plans for him, namely *Char's Counterattack* , a two-hour feature movie, in which the supposed deceased leader of AEUG comes back to lead the Neo-Jion forces to their final victory against the Federation. Amuro Rey, in his RX-93 Nu-Gundam, comes back as well to face his archenemy in their final battle. This was where *Gundam*, according to Tomino, was supposed to end...

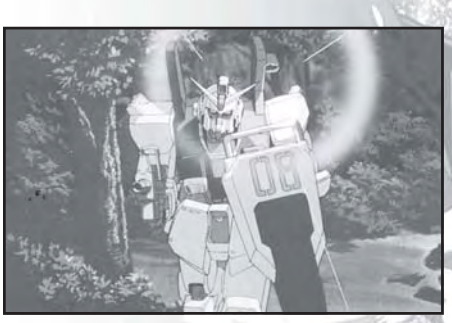
However, people still wanted more *Gundam* , so followed the very successful OVA series *Gundam 0080* and *Gundam 0083* (the last being, in our humble opinion, the best *Gundam* ever) and Tomino's nearly catastrophic feature movie, *Gundam F-91*, which led a lot of people to believe that he was finally done with *Gundam* . But it just wasn't so: Tomino came back with a vengeance in 1993 with the fantastic (and very successful) *V-Gundam* TV series, which rivaled *Zeta Gundam* in its shear intensity and magnitude of carnage. In 1995 came the *Gundam Wing* TV series (see PA #59), which was followed by *Gundam X* (see PA #41), the only Gundam TV series to ever be canceled because of abysmal ratings (and for good reasons). In 1999, Tomino directed the lastest *Gundam* TV series to date, *Turn-A Gundam*, which started a new timeline and was also quite successful. However, in 1995, had also began, concurrently to *Gundam Wing* , another OVA series, which took place in the U.C timeline so loved by the older Gundam fans: *The 08TH MS Team.*

Directed by Takeyuki Kanda (one of Sunrise's greatest directorial talents, who died in 1998) and Umanosuke Iida, with character designs by Toshihiro Kawamoto and mecha designs by Hajime Katoki, Kunio Okawara and Kimitoshi Yamane, this OVA series contains 12 volumes of 30 minutes each. There was also a theatrical movie, titled *The 08TH MS Team: Miller's Report*, which premiered in August 1998 (at the same time as the movie version of the *Gundam Wing* OVA *Endless Waltz* ).

The 08TH MS Team's story takes place in U.C 0079. The federation has started to retake the Earth territories lost in the first 9 months of the One Year War and the RX-78 Gundam MS is making such a difference in the space battles that the Federal High Command has ordered the manufacturing and testing of a limited run of prototype ground combat version, code named RX-79 [G]. These machines will be battle tested in South-east Asia by the Kojima battalion, composed of 12 teams (3 MS each). One of these teams will be the 08TH MS, a group of oddballs who chew through officers at an amazing rate.

The 08th MS is under the command of Lt. Shiro Amada, a newly arrived young officer straight out of Side 2's Military Academy. The men (and women) under his command are MS pilots Sergeant Terry Sanders and Sergeant Major Karen Joshua, with their support team, composed of Corporals Eledore Massis and Michel Ninorich. Although Shiro had begun his stint as with the 08TH MS with great optimism, pride and the hope to kick some Jion butt, he soon discovers that he, his friends and Aina, the woman he loves, are all cogs in the wheels of the now unstoppable, uncaring machine called war. As the war gets uglier, so do Shiro's dispositions toward it and his closeness to Aina, a Jion pilot, surely does not help to ease his distress one bit. The uglier things become and the more Shiro has to do things that disgust him. With his superiors distrusting him, his companions trying to ignore their suspicious feelings and his love for Aina, the beautiful Jion pilot, and his hate of war growing stronger every day, will Shiro be able to get out of the war alive? and if he does, will he be with Aina forever?...

If you like the original *Mobile Suit Gundam* (titled *First Gundam* in its English version) series being actually broadcast on the Cartoon Network, you will ADORE *The 08TH MS Team*, for it has the same feeling, but is even grittier. It is suppose to start its broadcast run soon, so have fun!!



Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

## BIG O ORIGINAL MANGA

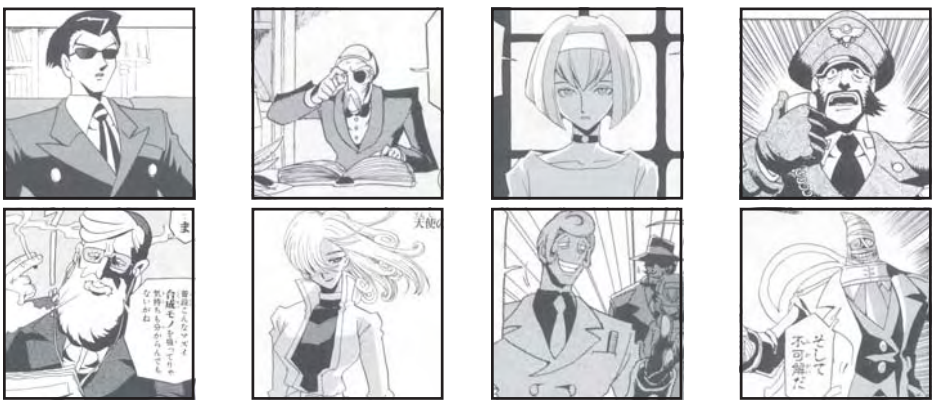
If you are a fan of the *Big O* — as the North American TV release (e.g. on the Cartoon Network) by Bandai made this series popular (see our coverage in PA# 62 pg. 58 and PA# 66 pg. 17-21) — you might be interested in the manga version, written by Hajime Yadate, and drawn by Hitoshi Ariga. The manga began in August 1999 issue of Magazine *ZKC*, published by Kodansha. The latest installment was published in February 2001 (episode #17, "The Sun will Rise Again") and so far the series is still going strong. In other words, the manga is offering more stories that were cruelly left untold when the TV series ended —including a tale about Roger Smith's old girlfriend from a past memory. I'm sure the manga will be picked up for an English translation, so I'm presenting to you information as a primer.

The anime ends at episode #13 where all fans are left hanging and longing for closure, so the manga offers more episodes not to mention more characters and weapons, such as Beck's three followers Tom, Kun and Yam — a loud-mouthed girl who rides the mecha with the other two. Also the manga shows that the Big O can change the shape of its arm, calling it the Big O Arm Option S.A. Roger Smith the negotiator looks quite different in the manga initially, but as the series progresses, his character design gradually transforms to its familiar style. Both Roger and Beck wear fashionable 3 piece suits, riding inside their MegaDeus with black gloves. It's funny to see superheroes that resemble 20s American gangsters; Roger is wearing a zoot suit!

Artist Hitoshi Ariga's simple style with sharp, clean lines almost makes the manga old-fashioned in its look and it suits the story well. As you know, unlike the anime's saturated colour which shows the sensitive atmosphere and the character's moods, the manga only offers stark black and white, save for a few special colour pages. And yet, Ariga's use of black is effective, though simple, as if he wanted to bring back the old-fashioned manga style of the likes of Osamu Tezuka. The mecha designs are roundish like early 1950-60s manga works. Speaking of Tezuka, the story of *The Big O* reminds me of the robots of *Astroboy* — and perhaps the look of *Gigantor*, especially when Dorothy questions herself, "I have the feelings of humans but I can't be human; I'm an android. Who am I?" Even other robots like Instru and Constanze ask the same puzzling question.

Ariga once explained how he comes up with such fantastic visions, as well as his obsession with memory. He writes, "When I lie down, I fall asleep, I dream. I dream of nostalgic scenery, old friends, etc. The house where I lived before in the past and the town and the school. Or I sometimes dream of towns where I've never been or seen before. Sometimes I dream of people whom only show up in my dreams. Dreams are mysterious. Often times I forget what I have dreamt as soon as I awake, or sometimes I remember years later, like *Déjà vu*."

So what is human consciousness? What is human memory? Throughout *The Big O*, Paradigm City and its people have lost their collective memory. In manga episode #15 "Remember Me?" the Mafia boss Albert asks Roger to get involved because Albert wants his late father's inheritance, a giant safe hidden inside the restaurant. Apparently, Papa didn't want anyone to have it! After a fierce battle between the Big O and Albert's mecha, what do you think is inside that safe? Millions (?!) of love letters which the Mafia Don (Albert's father) wrote to the woman he loved. No money! For his father, those letters meant more than all the money in the world. Aside from the sci-fi and giant robot part, this story's theme is "it's important to cherish memories, yet we must move on to the future."

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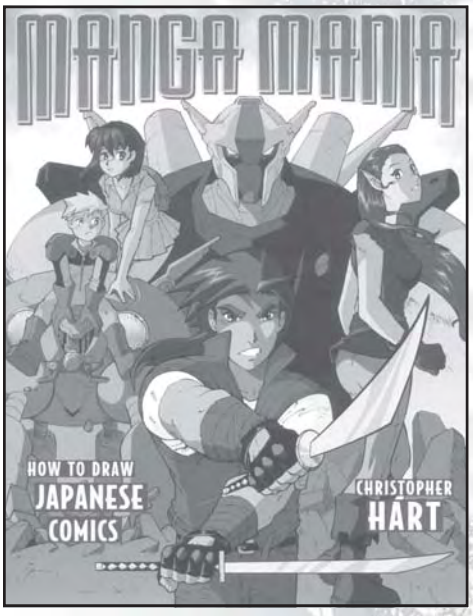
# CHRIS HART'S MANGA MANIA




Are you an aspiring artist? Do you have budding talent and an urge to draw in the manga style? Then this book is a must for you if you want to learn about Japanese comics and art. Of course, historically, all arts have influenced each other in every era, and in recent years the Japanese anime & manga art style has become a big entertainment industry phenomenon. This is in no small part thanks to TV, Internet, and video releases. More and more artists — whether they are amateur or professional — are aspiring to master the manga style and catch up with this popular trend. Christopher Hart, who has published a panoply of "How to" books in the past (8 books so far!) came up with this Japanese comic style study guide with popular topics for beginners and art students.

The manga style differs enormously from American or even European illustrations, but in recent years many Western artists have begun to adapt this style into their own works. Hart categorizes each subject according to manga genres, such as the basics, action poses, bad boys, fantasy, background, panel effects, as well as the fan favourites gorgeous manga babes, and giant robots. He also shows the differences between western comics and manga, especially in designing dynamic scenes.

He shows students how to express characters' inner thoughts with the use of flowers, petals (a shoujo staple), stars, swirls, ubiquitous speed lines, bursts of lightning, etc. These things are particularly unique to manga, as some western artists may be more comfortable using other techniques to express thoughts. However, manga is NOT anime. When a creator comes up with the characters, he/she really needs to know how to tell the story, panel by panel with images and a layout presentation.

If you're a male artist, "drop-dead gorgeous manga babes" might be of interest to you. How can an artist come up with such drawings? In fact male artists draw most so-called popular manga babes in Japan, so you can see the difference, how they are lovingly rendered and find out what makes them attractive. Also, male artists might love drawing giant robots — although it takes a long time to master technical drawing, I'm sure.

If you're a female artist, how would you like to come up with seductive characters? Hart has pages specifically devoted to female mangaka, with the topic of "The bad boys of manga". Why are they attractive? And what makes them so bad? Because, not only are they good looking and seductive, but they are in charge of their destinies and lives — perhaps a little overly self-confident. I sometimes think that if Lady Murasaki Shikibu, author of the *Tale of Genji* in 11th century Japan, were alive today she'd create her own bad boys of manga, for sure. Bad boys and Manga babes are another unique facet of Japanese comics, and arguably its most popular feature.

If you want to be more than just an amateur — or perhaps even semi-professional artist, Mr. Hart expresses his opinions on choosing work in both the Japanese and North American comic industries, in occupations such as penciller, inker, writer, editor, cover artist, publisher, colourist, letterer, proofreader, translator, etc. Although, he warns that making a living out of those professions is next to impossible. But if you can do more commercial jobs like advertising, computer games, children's book illustrations, chances for success are better, especially if you are talented.

So after all, good luck to all of you artists! Manga style is here to stay and it's up to you to make something of it. A great guide book for budding newcomers!

MANGA-KA TO SHITE SHIGOTO SHITAI DESU! WATASHI NO E O MISETEMO II DESU KA? *
*I WANT TO GET A JOB AS A MANGA ARTIST! MAY I SHOW YOU MY DRAWINGS?

**Illustration by Chris Hart**

***Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics.*** By Christopher Hart. New York, Watson Guptill Publications (www.watsonguptill.com), 2001. 144 pages (with 200 color and 100 B&W illustrations), $19.95 US ($30.95 Can), ISBN 0-8230-3035-0. **List of chapters**: Introduction, Manga Basics, Action Poses, The Bad Boys Of Manga, Manga Genres, Manga's Fantasy Realm, Drop-Dead-Gorgeous Manga Babes, Awesome Robot And Other Cool Stuff, Designing Dynamic Scenes, Common Japanese Terms, So You Want To Be A Cartoonist?, The Inside View: Interview with Bill Flanagan (Editor-in-chief of Viz Communications), Index. **Contributing artists**: Colleen Doran, Lea Hernandez, Francis Manapul, Mike Leeke & Bill Anderson, Svetlana Chmakova, Andy Kuhn, and Tim Smith. Christopher Hart (www.hart2draw.com/) also published many other similar instructional guides: *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Cartooning*, *How To Draw Animation*, *How To Draw Cartoon Animals*, *How To Draw Cartoons For Comic Strips*, *Cartooning For The Beginner*, *How To Draw Great-Looking Comic Book Women* and *Human Anatomy Made Amazingly Easy*..

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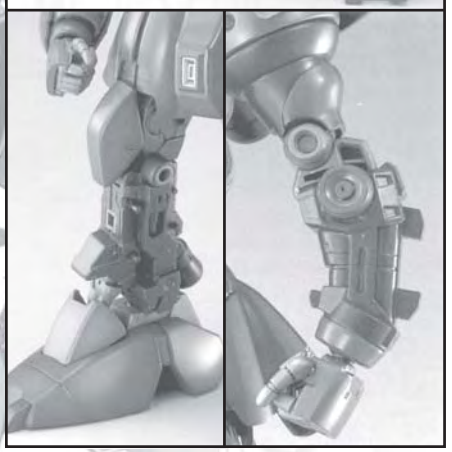
# MS-18E KAMPFER MASTER GRADE 1/100 BY BANDAI



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Since its brief apparition in the late 1980's OVA series *Gundam 0080: War In The Pocket* (in episode #4), the MS-18E Kampfer, because of its aggressive, no-nonsense styling, has always been a *Gundam* mecha fan favorite. A heavy assault MS, the unique Kampfer prototype was used as a decoy by a member of Jion's Cyclops commando team in charge of destroying the RX-78-4 Gundam "Alex" on Side 6 during an operation that took place in the last days of U.C 0079. Having been successful in its decoy operation, the Kampfer then directly attacked the "Alex", only to be shredded to pieces by the Gundam's 90mm Gatling cannons. Smaller, at 17.7 meters, than a standard MS-06 Zaku (18 meters), the Kampfer, in the "light" version in which it was used during the "Rubicon" operation on Side 6, was, however, much more powerful than a Zaku. With more than 160,000 Kg of thrust for less than 50 tons (dry weight) and a large number of maneuver verniers, it could move and maneuver much faster than a Zaku. Although somewhat lightly armored (to keep the weight low for transport), the "Rubicon" Kampfer was very heavily armed with a wide variety of weapons: Bazookas, Shotguns, 60mm Vulcans, Beam Sabers, Panzer Fausts, mines, etc. Although an extraordinary MS, the Kampfer was probably deemed too costly for mass-production and the one used in the Side 6 operation was the only one ever built. The fact that the war ended shortly after the apparition of the prototype did not help either...

One of the most popular *Gundam* models ever, the 1/144 scale Kampfer, released by Bandai in July 1989, was a rather stunning kit for its time, as it had a good posability (one of the first kits with Ball-Joints) and came with the entire weapon load seen in the *0080* OVA series, Ketten Mines included. However, the molding was only so so, the fit was rather poor, its body was much too squat and the entire kit did not really have the menacing aura it should have had. But now Bandai has taken care of these problems and given us something we could only dream of a few years ago: a 1/100 scale Master Grade Kampfer, the Holy Grail of many *Gundam* modelers!

This kit, released a few months ago, has been a real hit with all the Kampfer fans and here is why. First of all, while he general body shape of the machine remains the same, Hajime Katoki (mechanical designer for *Gundam Sentinel, 0083, V* and *W Gundam* and the designer for many of the MG kits) made some subtle changes, making the MG kit much better looking and much more functional than the 1/144 kit (waist, hip thrusters, arms, etc.). The kit, composed of 18 trees, contains around 360 parts in all (counting screws and PCs) and is molded in all the final colors (except for very minor details): dark greenish blue (a really odd color...), dark gray, medium gray, light bluish gray, yellow-orange (thruster inlays) and clear yellow (Beam Saber blades). The Mono-Eye is molded in clear.

This is a kit that comes together like a charm. The molding is superb (the top and bottom halves of the upper body are each molded in one, flawless panel!), everything fits perfectly, and, except for the top of each of the shoulders and lower back thrusters, there are just about no visible seams. Of course, as like all the newest MG kits, the entire movable structure in is ABS and the waist, knee and elbow joints are held together via screws (watch out for those, they are of rather poor quality and do not too many screwing and screwing very well). This is a very well detailed kit, featuring all the standard MG gadgetry — functioning cockpit hatch, movable Mono-Eye, re-

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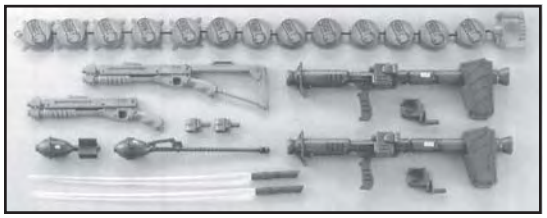
Kimeni Bradley Bardell (Order - 53033488)

movable armor panels (plugged on the structure via PCs), movable hands, etc. —plus some other cool details, such as functional weapons clamps, movable toes, detailing for the interior of the shoulder armor, lots of colored thruster inlays, etc. Since there had always been some problems with the Kampfer's hip thruster assembly and waist joint, Katoki took care of that. Now, the hips have two layers of armor and are slightly more flared to accommodate both the Beam Sabers AND the side thrusters, while the upper body swivels at the waist (back and fro and side to side), with the waist power cables now being mounted under the upper body, giving the waist an excellent range of movements.



However, the kit's most interesting feature is, for a lot of people, its full complement of weapons. The Bazookas and Panzer Fausts are rather standard, but the Shotguns, with their removable stocks and flip-up sights, are really cool. Our only regret is that they were not made with their slide cocking action, which would have been quite easy. The Ketten Mines are faithfully reproduced and are held together via a length of wire.

All in all, the MG Kampfer is a superb rendition of one of the most popular MS of all times. Its only negative aspects are the somewhat poorly fitting stickers (they should have been in foil...) and its price, ¥4,000 being quite costly for the means of a lot of fans. However, if you are a true MS fanatic, ¥4,000 is not much...

Complexity: **Intermediate** Molding: **4.5** Fit: **4.5** Posability: **4** Accuracy: **4.5** Average: **4.5**

## MS-07B3 GOUF CUSTOM MASTER GRADE 1/100 BY BANDAI

We will be blunt: the Gouf has never been one of our favorite MS. The curved shoulder points looked stupid, the whip thing looked a little too worm-like for our taste and the finger cannons seemed such a ridiculous idea. We did not like the Gouf... Until Hajime Katoki reworked the design for *The 08TH MS Team* , that is! Norris Packard's Gouf is a highly customized version, boosting much heavier armament than the standard Gouf seen in *Gundam MS*. Moreover, after seeing how Packard used his machine and how fearsome a Gouf really is, many people, us included, started to see this design in a much better light...

The 1/144 Gouf Custom having sold REALLY well and since they had released a 1/100 Master Grade Gouf not long before, it is not really surprising that Bandai decided to cash in on the Gouf Custom's popularity by releasing a Master Grade version. To our surprise, however, the Gouf Custom is more different from the standard Gouf kit than we would have thought. Nearly all the exterior panels are changed and the weaponry is entirely different (even the Heat Sword). A good part of the interior structure remains the same, however. The kit, superbly molded (the Gouf Custom parts are perfect, which is surprising, considering that Bandai is often a little careless with the sequel kits' parts) in sky blue, dark blue, blue-black, dark gray and clear orange (Hand Gatling sensor and cockpit hatch windows), contains 16 trees, with around 330 parts, counting screws and PCs. The kit, like all MG kits, features a great fit and goes together without any problems whatsoever. The only thing you should watch out for are the waist, elbow and knee joints. They are made in ABS and must be correctly assembled. We suggest a tight fit, but not so tight as you cannot bend the arms or legs (this goes for the Kampfer as well, they are the same joints). Making those joints too tight could result in warping the ABS parts while you are bending the limbs. Moreover, the screws contained in the kit are of rather low quality (why it is so is beyond our understanding), so be careful not to strip them while you screw (even pressure helps).

The kit's articulations are the same as with all other MGs: standard joints, plus Ball Joints for the shoulders, hands, ankles, etc. Like nearly all Jion designs, the Gouf Custom suffers from weak posability in the lower legs, a problem that originates from Kunio Okawara's original designs in the late 1970's. Luckily, Hajime Katoki found a way to redesign the armament (gone are the ridiculous Finger Cannons!): three 35mm Vulcan Cannons, mounted on the left forearm, replace the Finger Cannons, while the Heat Whip is replaced by a kind of electrical cable that can deliver jolts of currents to fry the enemy's electronics. A really cool weapon! The kit also contains a superb rendition of the HUGE 75mm Gatling Shield seen in the OVA. Warning!: the arm is not strong enough to keep it aloft, so be sure to have enough place around your kit to rest it on the ground.

In short, if you bought the first Gouf, you really should have waited for the Gouf Custom, because, at ¥3,000, it is a definite bargain. With the Kampfer, Bandai has now released two of the major Jion thug MS. Now we need a Gerbera Tetra...

Complexity: **Intermediate** Molding: **4.5** Fit: **4.5** Posability: **4** Accuracy: **4.5** Average: **4.5**

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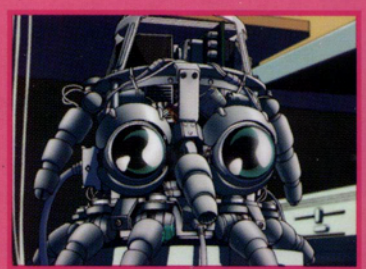

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Kieron Brooks's Bandit Comics #5 (2003) (2)

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Published by Protoculture; written by Andrea Baricordi, Massimiliano De Giovanni, Andrea Pietroni, Barbara Rossi, and Sabrina Tunesi; translated from the Italian by Adeline D'Opera . Edited & presented by *Protoculture Addicts*' staff. 320 pages, B&W, 1238 notices, fully indexed. ISBN 2-9805759-0-9. $25.00 US/Can.

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Kinko Bradley Bardell (Order: 53033483)

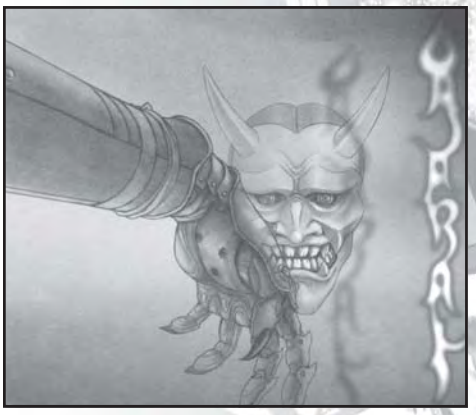
## ANIME TOONZ PRESENTS KIKUKO INOUE

Jellybean Recordings is introducing you to this CD of Ms. Kikuko Inoue's singing! She is a well-known voice actress in Japan and hard-core fans in North America probably best know her as Belldandy in *Oh, My Goddess*, Kasumi Tendo in *Ranma 1/2* or Aina Saharin in *Gundam 08th MS Team*). However, she has also released thirty solo music CDs in Japan. Here, in her first North American CD, she sings famous tunes from anime such as *Kare Kano*, *Sailor Moon*, *Evangelion*, *Magic Knight Rayearth*, *Sakura Diaries, Card Captor Sakura, Ah! My Goddess, Utena, Crayon Kingdom, Escaflowne*, etc., with a funky, disco-style to the backing tracks. This is definitely dance party music to crank at full blast! So turn the TV off, dim the lights and party with hip disco music! [MM]

*Anime Toonz* features some of the most popular anime songs remixed in new flavors: House, Progressive and Drum & Bass. Personally, I don't like that kind of remixing. The lyrics don't seem to go well with the beat. I would rather listen to the original songs. I guess it is a question of taste. There is a nice 18-page booklet with the CD. The choice of font for the texts is horrible, but there are nice illustrations of Shinya Hasegawa. All in all, it is an "interesting" compilation... [CJP]

**Anime Toonz Presents Kikuko Inoue**. Jellybean Recordings (www.jellybeanrecordings.com), Cat.# JBR-5045-2, 12 Tracks, 64:22 min., $16.00 US. (Available at Amazon.com).

## GASARAKI



This CD came out in March '99 and you can enjoy the music of *Gasaraki*, all composed and arranged by Mr. Kuniaki Haishima who used traditional Japanese Noh music. The essence of traditional Japanese culture is the heart which becomes one with nature, and Noh express the dark side of human feelings a lot, I think. In this CD, some readers (listeners) might not be too familiar with the style of performance named "Utai" (Noh style singing). Originally this style was established during Japanese Medieval civil war about 500 years ago or so, and yet, you will find that "Utai" exists or can exist in any form of rhythm or any style of music without ruining the other sound. Opening theme song "Message #9", performed by Ms. Tomoko Tane, is very modern (in fact she sings in English!). The story of *Gasaraki* is very complicated and its theme is "where do we humans come from and where do we go?" In a way, life is the beginning and ending, and this music fits the uncertainty of life. This CD music is very heavy and serious, so we have to be rather in the mood to listen to it. There are 20 tracks (titles are all written in English!) and some sound like Gothic music. If you're a classical music fan, this CD is definitely for you! Not only European Medieval style music, but also Noh style music and Utai take you to the world where there is no time (mysterious world for sure!). Excellent performance!

***Gasaraki* OST Vol. I**. Victor Entertainment, Cat.# VICL-60295, 20 tracks, 49:59 min., ¥3,045.

## VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU OST

My first impression when I saw the credits for 34 composed tracks that comprise over 70 minutes on one CD was "Wow, this CD is a super bargain!" This BGM is, of course, from the TV anime *Vampire Princess Miyu*. To tell you the truth the music is VERY Japanese, consisting of traditional tunes, Japanese drums and a flute called a Fue. There are three vocalists, Saeko Suzuki (who sings "Miyu-Yachiyo" [The Eternal Time]), Miki Nagasawa (who sings "Manmaru Temari Uta" [The Song of a Round Ball]) and Hiroko Kasawara ("Ai-Tai" [I'd Love to Meet You]). All the music was created by one of Japan's top composers Kenji Kawai (*Ghost in the Shell*, *Blue Seed*, *Patlabor*, etc.). Narumi Kakinouchi, the artist of *Miyu* herself, wrote the lyrics! Basically *Miyu* is categorized as horror-anime, so most of the themes are dark, but some of the tracks are very calm, with a romantic touch — using keyboards, piano, shinobue (Japanese flute), strings and even a children's chorus as well (the Dandelion Children's Chorus Group in Tokyo). Despite the genre of the anime, the CD is superb in it's own way. Personally, I am quite fond of this one and I keep listening to it over and over again. Highly recommended!

This is the Japanese Original Soundtrack (BackGround Music). However, on August 23, TokyoPop Anime Soundtrax is releasing a *Vampire Princess Miyu* Official Soundtrack (Cat.# TPCD-0206-2, $14.95 US), but we don't know yet if it will be exactly the same CD. TokyoPop's CD content might differs a little (possibly shorter).

***Vampire Princess Miyu* OST**. Victor Entertainment, Cat.#VICL-60121, 34 Tracks, 73:06 min., ¥3,045.

*Gasaraki* and *Miyu* CDs provided by Yui Yuasa & Nene Tamaki.

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## FANTASIA 2001: OVERVIEW

André Dubois & Mitch Davis at the Opening

The Crowd

Bruce Law

Tomo Haraguchi's Q&A

Left: Kon Satoshi; Above: André Rivard & André Dubois

The Fantasia 2001 Festival took place from July 10th to 31th 2001 at the Imperial Theater in Montréal, Canada. This was its sixth year and the Festival keeps growing each year. This year, the main sponsor was Sony Playstation. During those three weeks, all young people who love to watch weird and exotic movies really had a great time, experiencing world premieres with Directors and Producers who came to present their brand new shows and movies. Total attendance was around 65,000 and guests from all over the globe came here to meet the fans (almost thirty Directors, Producers and film crew people).There are two genres of movies at Fantasia: Asian films, including Japanimation, and international B-movies (horror, grotesque, weird, you name it). Most films are not shown in ordinary theaters the way Hollywood movies are, therefore the fans flock here to see movies as weird as anyone could imagine! On July 10th, Fantasia started with *Final Fantasy :The Spirits Within* and ended on the 31st with films the fans wanted to see again. A lot of sold-out shows really proved that this festival is loved by local fans as well as by many visitors from all over the world. This year, Japanese movies and anime stole all important awards. The Critic's Award went to Director Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Seance* and a special award was presented to Director Tatsuo Sato for his movie *Nekojiru-So*. The Best Anime Award went to *Millennium Actress*, directed by Satoshi Kon, who arrived directly from Japan with his wife to present this movie! Also, the Best Artistic And Innovative Film Award went to two movies: Spain's *The Heart Of The Warrior*, directed by Daniel Mozon, and Japan's *Visitor Q*, directed by Takashi Miike. Most of those awards went to Japanese films, but, personally, I enjoyed other Asian films from Hong Kong and Korea, such as South Korea's *The Foul King* and *Barking Dogs Never Bite!*, as well as Hong Kong's *Jiang Hu* . It felt good to find that Asian films are here to stay, accepted by the North American fans, and that its industry is in such good health that it can bring us so many excellent movies! Jet Li's classic Kung-Fu movies *Once Upon A Time In China 1* and *2*'s 35mm prints looked really good on a wide screen.

Also, Fantasia 2001 surely had a festive atmosphere every weekend with episodes of the *Captain Harlock* TV series from 1978. Here in Québec, young adults watched this show, titled *Albator Le Corsaire De L'Espace* in French, while growing up and, now that they are adults with day jobs, they wanted to have fun and enjoy *Albator* again. Fantasia programmer André Dubois and his dedicated friends (André Rivard as Captain Harlock really looked great!) showed up, wearing *Harlock* characters costumes, and went on stage every weekend. In fact, four episodes had never been shown on TV here before, due to the French TV censorship caused by the characters' drinking habits, etc. Japanimation surely has progressed since the 1970's and, to many young people (or newcomers to anime), this show might have looked really primitive, but the innocence was surely there, and those older fans are really the core of the Fantasia Festival. I bet that Mr. Matsumoto would have been delighted to see those enthusiastic *Harlock* fans if he would have been here to encounter them!

Speaking of anime, this festival presented movies such as *Akira* and *Laputa* . Time flies and those 1980's anime are already old classics. Fantasia's assistant Director, Montréal-based, Korean-born Ms. Mi-Jeong Lee also made her debut to show her own film, *Onion*. Congratulations, Mi-Jeong! Also Stéphane Morrissette's *Otaku* (a local film) really added some color to the festival. Special thanks to Director Pierre Corbeil! I hope Fantasia will be even more successful next year!! [MM]

## FANTASIA 2001: JAPANESE ANIMATION

### Akira

*Akira* shouldn't need any introduction. When it was released in Japan in July 1988, it quickly became, because of its great technical qualities and immense success, a turning point of the anime industry. It played an even more important role abroad, particularly in North America, where it introduced many to the beauties of Japanese animation, contributing to broaden the anime market worldwide. *Akira* was at the cutting edge of animation technics (full-animation, detailed and vivid hand-painted cels, innovative special effects, etc.) and the most expansive anime of its time. For those reasons, it is still considered by many as one of the best feature film of the anime history. However, *Akira* owes its cult status among the fans not to its technical achievements, but mostly to its thought-provoking plot, explosive action and ultra-violent story.

But why, thirteen years later, release this movie again in theatres? In order to re-introduced this classic movie to a new generation of viewers, Pioneer Entertainment (which recently acquired the distribution rights) had the movie restored with the latest high-definition digital technology at the cost of $1 million U.S. The digital remastering process included color correction, dirt and scratches removal and resulted in a sharper, more vivid version fit for digital projection and DVD release. The audio track was also re-dubbed using a new cast and a

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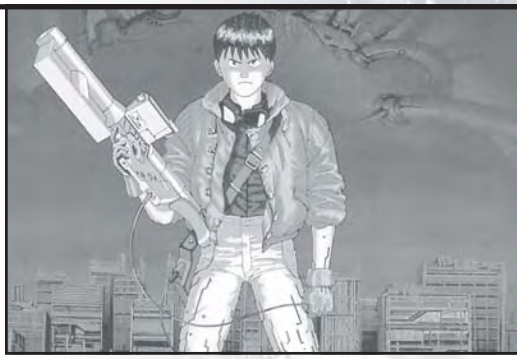
## FANTASIA 2001: JAPANESE ANIMATION (Continued)

newly translated script, and then re-mixed with the original music and effects as a Dolby Digital AC3 Surround, THX-approved soundtrack. *Akira* should now be an entirely new experience!

However, my first reaction after the movie was "Where's the million?" It didn't feel much different than when I first saw it on a big screen in San Diego in August '89. The sound has now more punch and the dubbing is much better (although some voices, like the Colonel, sounded better in the old version). The changes are not as spectacular as it was hyped, but they are there and it makes a little difference. Anyway, *Akira* will always remain a classic that everyone must see. [CJP] ***Akira***, Japan, 1988, 124 min., Based on Katsuhiro Otomo's manga. Directed by Katsuhiro Otomo. Produced by Tokyo Movie Shinsha for Kodansha. Voice cast: Joshua Set (Tetsuo), Wendee Lee (Kei). ★★★★☆



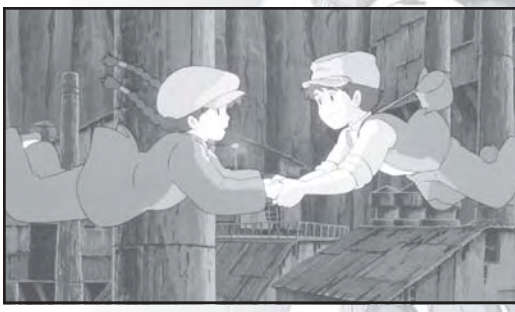
### BoogiePop Phantom

*BoogiePop Phantom* is a 12-episode animated TV series that played on TV Tokyo every wednesdays at 1:45 am during the first months of 2000. It is based on the popular and award-winning novel series by Kouhei Kadono, *Boogiepop wa Warawanai* (*The Boogiepop Never Laughs*) — which has also spawn a live-action theatrical feature. The TV series begins with the final scene of the novel's first chapter. One night, the school is hit by lightning and, ricocheting from the school, the light climbs toward space, causing all sorts of electrical problems in the city. A month later, strange things begin to happen… A suicidal girl is about to jump, a biker tempts his own death by driving at recklessly high speeds, etc. All appears to be possessed by an entity of some sort! Schoolgirls are whispering rumours about this enigmatic figure, Boogiepop, saying that it is the Death God who brings people to the next world before they become "too ugly" to live on Earth. Meet her one dark night and you are taken! No one knows for sure who Boogiepop is… People tell each other stories and laugh: no one believes that she exists in this day and age. Still, there are some strange things that appear to be going on….

This TV series is like an anthology of urban legends & mysteries, with each episode spotlighting a different character, but everything will eventually appears to be tied together. Bordering horror and psychological drama, it is one of those weird anime (in some aspects similar to *Serial Experiment Lain*) born from the fears of the new millenium and which reflects on the human condition. It is dark and weird, so if you liked *Lain* you'll like *BoogiePop*. However, the story unfold slowly and it takes more than three episodes (like it was shown at Fantasia) to really appreciate its complexity. [CJP] *BoogiePop Phantom*, TV Series, 25 min. each. Direction: Takashi Watanabe; Screenplay: Sadayuki Murai (*Perfect Blue*); Production: Studio Madhouse. ★★★

### Laputa

This anime feature film, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, was first presented in Japan in 1986. Now, fifteen years later, this film was brought to the audiences of Fantasia 2001 as an anime classic (gee, time sure flies!), courtesy of Buena Vista Home Entertainment, with excellent voice actors (and they're stars from Hollywood!), such as Anna Paquin (*X-Men*) as Sheeta, James Van Der Beek as Pazu and none other than Mark Hamil (Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*) as the evil Muska! No one in the US thought Japanimation would become mainstream entertainment material in the 1980's, but now, even fifteen years since this anime was created, the film still shines like a jewel, with a fantastic (remixed) soundtrack by Jo Hisaishi! New anime fans surely enjoyed this big screen presentation and the beauty of the imaginary world of Laputa. It is more like a European children's' adventure story (it was inspired by Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's travel's*) than anything else. You'll fall in love with Dora, the old pirate lady, that's for sure! [MM] ★★★★☆



### Neko-Jiru-So

This anime is the adaptation of the manga, which was published through Garo Magazine, directed by Tetsuo Sato. Totally surrealistic, therefore viewers must not watch this show hoping for it to have any common sense (because there is none!). The story is simple... It's the story of the affection of brother Nyata and sister Nyako (Nyata literally means "Miaow-Boy" and Nyako "Miaow-Girl") for each other. Nyako gets ill and the God of Death came to bring her to the next world. Nyata somehow managed to take back half of her soul, but now he has to find the other half if he wants to bring her back totally alive. So they go on a journey to find it. Cat lovers can enjoy this ultra surrealistic world of innocence and fraternal love and see this movie as if it was a dream. It might not appeal to all anime fans, but there is no dialogue so that it can be seen anywhere without any language barrier. Let's take a trip to look for an important thing in the metal flower garden! Innocent, but cynical at the same time!! [MM] ★★★☆

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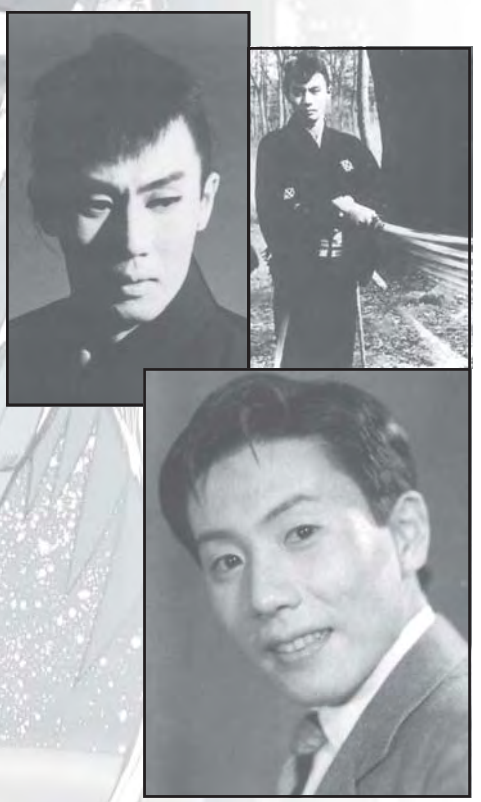
## SLEEPY EYES OF DEATH: SWORD OF SATAN & KYOSHIRO NEMURI SERIES ★★★☆



First of all, I'd like to thank AnimEigo for having brought the Kyoshiro Nemuri series from Japan's Golden Age of cinema to North America! I'm sure that many readers of this magazine have never heard of this series or its star Raizo Ichikawa who played Kyoshiro, so I'd like to give more background on them. Many fans of Japanese movies know who Toshiro Mifune (*7 Samurai*, *Yojimbo*) is, but just a few know who Raizo Ichikawa is. He was considered one of Japan's top actors in the 1950's and 1960's and his enthusiastic fans established the Raizo Ichikawa fanclub in the 60's and, even today, it's a very active organization. If you're interested please visit the club "Rou Rai Kai" at www.hermosawave.net/miwa/miwa.htm (the site even has English!)

Raizo Ichikawa is of course his stage name. He was born Kichiya Ota on August 29th, 1931 in Kyoto. A Kabuki actor, Kudanji Ichikawa, adopted him at 6 months old to train him as a Kabuki actor. His talent was already being recognized by the great master of Kabuki Theatre in the Kansai area, Jukai Ichikawa, and he became Jukai's adopted son. After becoming a professional in 1951, Daiei Motion Picture Co. Ltd. discovered his talents and signed him under contract. By 1958 he had become a huge money making cinema star! He died on July 17th 1969, but even over 30 years after his death from liver cancer, his Japanese fans are legion (young and old) and continue to grow. People still enjoy the films he appeared in (over 150 movies altogether!).

There are 12 films in the Kyoshiro Nemuri series (from 1963 up until his death in '69: *The Chinese Jade*, *Sword Of Adventure*, *Full Circle Killing*, *Sword Of Seduction*, *Sword Of Fire*, *Sword Of Satan*, *The Mask Of The Princess*, *Sword Of Villainy*, *A Trail Of Traps*, *Hell Is A Woman*, *In The Spider's Lair*, and *Castle Menagerie* — up to now only the first six have been released by AnimEigo) which were cranked out rapidly by the Daiei Company each year, due to the large success of the series in those days. The name of this crazy samurai character Kyoshiro Nemuri literally means the "sleepy madman". Original creator and novelist Renzaburo Shibata came up with this fictitious character and his name. His original stories show the dark side of life including rapes and killing without mercy. Raizo was not the only actor to play the role of Kyoshiro in films. Like a samurai James Bond many others took on the character, such as popular actor (especially among the ladies) Koji Tsuruta, but the author himself has stated that Raizo's portrayal is best of all! After Raizo's death, another good looking actor, Hiroki Matsukata, played the role for two movies.

Actually, the original stories are grotesque with erotic scenes, but of course in 1960's Japan, the movie studio couldn't show these things just yet (as far as erotic scenes go, there aren't many). As for the background of Kyoshiro, he's the child of a Catholic missionary who came to Japan and the daughter of the samurai class. Due to his lineage, he was damned at birth and his upbringing contained little love or anything like that. He was a no nonsense, wicked man originally, but in the films his ruthlessness has been toned down quite a bit to be more "moral". I suppose the Japanese public (especially the female fans of Raizo) wasn't ready for that type of anti-hero, with his beloved katana sword named Muso Masamune (means "no feelings"! Gasp!). The original stories by Shibata continued for over 20 years for Shincho Publishing Company. Raizo was absolutely perfect for the role in those days, but if I think of this Euro-Asian samurai today, maybe a real Euro-Asian actor could play Kyoshiro now, if any more films were to be made again, I hope?!

In this sixth movie, *Sword Of Satan*, the fate of a mighty clan depends on finding the illegitimate son of the late Lord. Kyoshiro gets involved when it turns out that the little boy doesn't want to be a Daimyo: he wants to be a carpenter. But the clan elders know that unless the kid becomes their master (whether he likes it or not), their clan is doomed. Unfortunately for them, Kyoshiro owes the boy a favor... It is not the best of samurai movies, but it is nice enough to be quite entertaining. As for AnimEigo's excellent full-colour widescreen collector's edition release (with their always excellent liner notes and historical background details) North American samurai movie fans can enjoy Raizo's charm thoroughly! We heard many critics complain about the adaptation of the dialogs (modernizing Kyoshiro's harsh language), but, personally, we are quite satisfied with AnimEigo's translation. For newcomers, the politics may be difficult to follow, but just watching Raizo and his swordsmanship exterminating the villains can be a lot of fun. Highly recommended for Samurai lovers!

***Sleepy Eyes Of Death: Sword Of Satan [Nemuri Kyoshiro Masho-ken]***. AnimEigo (Samurai Cinema), Cat.# AT099-015, Subtitled, Color, Widescreen, 75 min., $26.95 US. PG (Violence, Coarse Language, Some Nudity and Adult Situations). Japan, 1965, Dir.: Yasuda Kimiyoshi; Original Story: Shibata Renzaburo; Scr.: Hoshikawa Seiji; Phot.: Takemura Yasekazu; Sound: Otsumi Masao; Cast: Ichikawa Raizo, Saga Michiko, Hasegawa Machiko, Miyojo Masako, Suga Fujio; Producer: Daiei Co, Ltd. The first four movies are also available on Laserdiscs ($4.95 US!!) from AnimEigo (www.animeigo.com/Samurai/SLEEPY.t).

Video provided by AnimEigo. Pictures from *Kinema Junpo* #1308 (05-2000): 33, 75.

Kirsty Bradley Bardell (Order: 53033483)

## DRAGON BLUE ★★★

This B-movie from Gaga Communications offers viewers the exotic locale of Japan's Southern island prefecture of Okinawa with mysterious spirits and monsters! You can watch this fantasy world about a remote island with a legend! The main heroine, Mayuko, is a young Fu-sheng spiritualist exorcising evil spirits (incidentally we say "Fu Sui" in Japanese, meaning wind and water power) and all the ingredients of fantasy are present in this film. The handsome detective (a real Japanese wrestler!) really looks reliable and dependable. The monster suit is the work of Steve Wang (*Relic, Predator*) and it might amuse viewers (although it's far from being "spectacular"). One of the last lines says, "Who is evil here? The monster or the humans?" 80 minutes of surprising delight for horror movie fans! Japan, 1995, Dir.: Takuya Wada; Scr.: Kazuhiro Inaba; Creature Design: Steve Wang; Creature Creations: Tomo Yoshida; Producers: Gaga Communications / Kyodo Television.

ADV Films (Rubbersuit), Cat.# ALA-015S, Subtitled, 80 min., $14.95 US. 17+ (Violence, Nudity).

## SUMO VIXENS ★★★☆

This B-movie is a great comedy that will make you laugh extremely hard! In fact, I ended up laughing during the entire film! Starring Kei Mizutani (*Weather Woman*) and other well-known Japanese comedians, it makes you feel like you're watching a live-action version of a funny manga! The story begins when a former sumo wrestler gets out of prison and meets a beauty who wants to save her mother's hotel and ladies Sumo Dojo. The story sounds absurd, but it works very well within the framework of this comedy. So when you're in the mood for something ridiculous and want to relax and have a laugh, this film will hit you like a piledriver. Topless ladies are big attractions, but comic book-like acts are delightful. Japan, 1996, Dir./Scr.: Takao Nakano; Phot.: Hideki Hasegawa; Art Dir.: Tooru Nishimura; Music Dir.: Hiroaki Yabunaka; Cast: Arase Eba, Kei Mizutani, Shouko Kudou, Keisuke, Kyouko Nakamura, Aya Koizumi; Prod.: TMC.

Asia Pulp Cinema, Cat. #APC-1982, Dubbed, 73 min., $29.99 US. 18+ (Nudity, Violence & Adult Situations).

## TERMINATRIX ★★★☆

This B-movie is a softcore porn version of *Terminator*, and with its many humourous scenes you can enjoy this take on a fantasy world. In a future where sex is banned (only used for reproduction in a government-controlled environment), a woman rebelled against this slavery. The government fights back by sending a killer sex-droid in the past to render her father impotent! I ended up laughing hysterically whenever the android Terminatrix 69 showed up on screen. Starring *Weather Woman*'s Kei Mizutani, you can expect to have great fun watching her sexy body. The whole atmosphere is like "manga in live action". Shouko Kudou plays the vicious Terminatrix quite well with her heavy make-up! The original title *Insatsu no Toriko* means the "slave of obscene killing". When you're in the mood for a good laugh, I highly recommend this erotic parody. Japan, 1995, Dir./Scr.: Mikio Hirota; Cast: Kei Mizutani, Naofumi Matsuda, Shouko Kudou, Saeko Ichijou, Yuuki Fujisawa, Yasunori Matsuda; Prod.: TMC.

Asia Pulp Cinema, Cat. #APC-1983, Dubbed, 70 min., $29.99 US. 18+ (Nudity, Violence & Adult Situations).

## UNDRESSED FOR SUCCESS ★★☆

Since the great success of the live-action film version of *Weather Woman*, actress Kei Mizutani has become a cult movie queen and now she is invading North America to charm you! She invites you into a small boudoir (tidy lady's private room) in this Playboy-style video to show off her fantastic body in front of your drooling eyes! No script. No Story. And no clothes (well, a bit of sexy underwear). Enjoy Kei's sexy body in different places: inside the room, in a forest, etc. And if you're a hardcore fan, she has her own web-site you can visit at www.keimizutani.com. Unfortunately, the video is not even translated (it's in the original Japanese dialogue), so you can't understand Kei's inciting comments (giving information about herself, saying things like "come closer," etc.). And it is quite short for its price. But we are sure you will enjoy every bit! Japan, 1995, Dir.: Shouken Takahashi; Stylist: Emi Murakami; Make-up: Tetsu Ishihara; Lighting: Haruo Hara; Phot.: Youjirou Fukuda; Starring: Kei Mizutani; Prod.: TMC / HV Project.

Asia Pulp Cinema, Cat. #APC-1993, 40 min., $19.99 US. 18+ (Nudity & Adult Situations).

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# ANECDOTES FROM DIRECTOR KUNIHIKO IKUHARA

**Picture from the CD booklet**

**Cover of *Schell Bullet*'s novel 1: *Aden Arabie***

***Schell Bullet's* CD soundtrack: *Thanaphs 68***
**(King Records, Cat.# KICA-516, 10 Tracks, 53 min., ¥3,059).**
**Available at www.cdjapan.co.jp.**

A special thanks to the people at Central Park Media who arranged this telephone conversation on behalf of Protoculture so I was able to speak with and interview anime director Kunihiko Ikuhara (of *Sailor Moon* and *Utena* fame!) on April 18th, 2001 during his trip to New York city supervising the English language adaptation of *Revolutionary Girl Utena*: the Movie!

First of all I'm sure many readers out there are aware that Ikuhara has been living in Los Angeles as a foreign student to study "film" at the Film Institute. He is planning to stay in the US at least a year, maybe two, to learn more about films which will enable him to bring more excellence to his work and future projects. So welcome to the USA Ikuhara-san — and I'm sure that many American fans will see him turn up at various conventions in the next little while.

I asked him several questions regarding the *Revolutionary Girl Utena* TV series and movie, especially in respect to the lesbianism and homosexuality elements in general. His response was that "In Japan, we generally aren't exposed to visible homosexual people, unless you live in Tokyo and other big cities and look for them in certain places. Many people think that it's a fairytale or an unrealistic story, even today. Shows like *Utena* or [the Japanese version] of *Card Captor Sakura*, we, the creators, haven't had any problem releasing in Japan. The general public here take these shows as totally made up stories for entertainment value and it never occurs to them to relate to them in their own lives or the way other people live. Possibly in the US, homosexual people can be just about anywhere, even outside of major cities. Homosexuals are "hiding" in Japan and hardly come out of the closet like they do in the USA." Well I suppose that there are still many Japanese who live in an orderly manner and take these shows as "fantasy", just like many Japanese ladies flock to Takarazura (the all-female theatre troupe who have done plays based on manga such as *Rose of Versailles*) to see the fancy costumes and the plays. In a way, *Utena* is a costume play done in a very unrealistic manner.

Director Ikuhara's newest work is the novel *Schell Bullet*, which he would like to create the anime version of for the world market in the future. Ikuhara is inspired by the words that Hermann Hesse (a German/Swiss writer) wrote once in his work *Damien*, saying, "The world is like an egg. When someone wants to be born, someone has to break a world." *Revolutionary Girl Utena*'s theme is just like those words, "Unless someone breaks the egg's shell, he or she would die without being born — like a dead chick." The world where the girls in *Utena* are living might be a lot of fun (school, etc.), but it is very closed. Children must leave the shell (their sheltered life — even though it might be difficult and dangerous to do so — to be free and live as a mature person). So he is creating *Schell Bullet* as a story about a young boy's growth and his struggle for freedom. He says, "*Schell Bullet* is basically a science fiction story. In the world we live today, people tend to create and discriminate due to religion and skin colour. In *Schell Bullet*, the class system is organized and made up based on one's DNA. The main protagonist is Olso Blake, from the lowest of the low class, and he's extremely unhappy about his lot in life. He yearns to be an elite. Objectively speaking he is a beautiful, androgynous 19 year-old boy (bishonen) with an enormous DNA complex. He comes aboard the spacecraft telling lies about his birth and DNA. It's the story of this boy's struggle to show off as an elite (although he's not capable of doing his job as a crewmember on the ship). Ikuhara is trying to find people who can do the work of translating this book into English in the near future, so I'm sure that anime fans will be seeing it soon! (Mamoru Nagano [*Five Star Stories*] is co-creator also!)

I also probed him on his view of the economical slump that's affecting Japan and his answer was, "I don't know if Japan's poor economy is affecting the anime industry that much in general, but I can say that many of the sponsors are paying less money, forcing many of the studios to deal with smaller budgets to create their shows." Overall, I'm sure the anime industry will survive (they will just have to adjust to this trend in society).

If you readers want to send letters or presents, please write to: Director Kunihiko Ikuhara, Attention: Keiko Nayuki, Central Park Media Corporation, 250 West 57th St., Suite #317, New York, NY 10107 USA.

Thank you Ikuhara-san, and please keep up your good work!



Kirsten Beckley Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# CONVENTION REPORT: SAKURA CON

Dozens of costumers stood next to an odd-looking dome in Everett, Washington, shivering outside in the evening chill as they waited their turn to appear in the Sakura Con costume contest. Then it started to rain. Realizing that the participants in their largest event were going to get soaked, convention officials rushed the costumers around the dome and into a hall at the Holiday Inn where the convention was held. The costumers were herded down another hall before they were brought back to the dome so the program could start. And, in the best tradition of the theater, the show did go on, to a polite and entertained audience. The costumers' enthusiasm wasn't dampened by the rain, and when Sakura Con held their gripe session on the convention's final day, only one of the cosplayers returned to complain. That entire gripe session was cut short because of a lack of criticism.

Sakura Con, held April 27-29, 2001, joined the list of anime conventions that enjoyed major growth. In space and attendance, the event nearly doubled in size from one year to the next. Fewer than 900 had gone to Sakura Con in 2000, but more than 1,500 traveled to the Pacific Northwest in 2001 – so many that the convention had to turn fans away on their busiest day, Saturday. For the first time, Sakura Con had to deal with lines of fans waiting to get into their dealers' room.

Fans got to see a huge banner promoting the *Oni* title from Bungie Software and see demonstrations of Japanese games from Enix that had not been released in North America. They heard actor Pam Lauer talk about voicing the dub role of Kei in *Dirty Pair* and listened to Steve Bennett of Studio Ironcat describe how he won over a skeptical audience of parents in Iowa when he told them that anime told Christian stories, too.

And the convention was fortunate to ride the crest of popularity enjoyed by that season's hottest anime title, *The Big O*. Through the Cartoon Network's cablecast in the U.S. fans had been entranced by the story of android Dorothy Wainright, negotiator Roger Smith and his giant robot. And one of the people responsible for *Big O*'s popularity, scriptwriter and actor Lia Sargent, was on hand at Sakura Con. "It's cool. It has an edge to it," Sargent said about the show. She disagreed with the fan observations that *Big O* resembled *Batman*, saying she wrote the dialogue as if it was for a Sam Spade detective novel or a James Bond adventure.

After playing outgoing personalities such as Chun Li (Sargent's favorite "because she fights so well") and Milly Thompson, Sargent had to underplay the role of Wainright. "it was hard for me to play a monotone with all that humor. They said "That was so happy... don't play it so happy.""

"Out of a lot of the shows I've done, it was the least confusing. Some of the anime I've done, I have no idea what's going on," Sargent added, mentioning *Serial Experiments Lain* as the series that confounded her the most. Sargent was "dead" in most of *Lain*, playing the voice of the girl who kills herself in the first episode and haunts Lain for the rest of the series.

While Sargent was making her first anime convention appearance since Anime Expo in 1998, director Hiroki Hayashi was making what has turned out to be the latest in a series of annual appearances at North American events. Like Sargent, Hayashi traveled to Sakura Con on the heels of a major accomplishment, having finished a demo reel of the forthcoming *Magical Witchland* series for AIC. Hayashi had wanted to try a new project and new techniques, and he got his wish with *Witchland*, which promises to break new ground in the look of anime. While *Witchland* joins the anime series which are animated solely on computer systems and dispenses with ink and paint, it takes that technique one step further and gives the characters a three-dimensional look.

The audience enjoyed the demo reel – which took two years to develop. Hayashi and his computer graphics specialist, Mitsutaka Iguchi, found it was harder than they expected to create convincing characters and movement, but the demonstration showed that they've solved the problems.

Using computer graphics means that directors can create scenes that are more complex than cel-animated scenes, Hayashi emphasized. And that could lead to anime that is more animated. "Sometimes, dialogue is used to cover up for the lack of shots on the screen. I'd like to be able to make the film more fully animated," Hayashi said.

Those who like the elements of Japanese culture and fantasy in Hayashi's shows such as *Sol Bianca*, *Tenchi-Muyo* and *El-Hazard* might be surprised to know that the director enjoyed 1960's American TV shows: *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Star Trek*, *Lost in Space* and *Bewitched*. "At the time, Japan was still a growing media industry and Japan couldn't make the sort of entertainment that the U.S. was making for the world," he said.

Still, North American anime fans who may have never seen the series that Hayashi liked got some special enjoyment from a demonstration of Japanese culture at Sakura Con. Singer and dancer Mary Ohno, who runs a kabuki academy in the Seattle area, had convention fans singing along with her and shouting approval of her dances, once she told the fans that kabuki was as much a kind of dinner theater as a traditional art form.

Sakura Con was so successful and few so much in 2001 that the convention organizers, the Asia Northwest Cultural Education Association, decided they needed more room – and fast. Before the 2001 convention was held, the association had signed a three-year contract to hold future Sakura Cons at the new Hilton hotel and convention center at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, beginning on April 26-28, 2002. Other Sakura Cons are scheduled for April 4-6, 2003 and April 23-25, 2004.

**Actor Lia Sargent**

**Kabuki artist Mary Ohno**

**Director Hiroki Hayashi**

**Above: Computer artist Mitsutaka Iguchi**
**Below: Actor Pam Lauer**

Pictures by Kevin Lillard. For more information: www.fansview.com and www.sakuracon.org

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# CONVENTION REPORT: ANIME CENTRAL

Actor Yuko Kagata

Actor Wendee Lee

Artist Yoshitoshi Abe

Above: Artist Range Murata
Below: Artist & Mecha Designer Mika Akitaka

Fresh faces brightened the fourth Anime Central and took fans' minds off the indoor construction zone. For once, the highways around Arlington Heights, Illinois weren't desperately torn up on the weekend of the suburban Chicago convention. However, the Sheraton Arlington Park made up for that shortcoming by tearing up the hotel where the convention was held on May 11-13, 2001. Fans arrived to find the hotel's main entrance was closed and the lobby was chopped down to a fraction of its usual size.

But the convention was entertaining enough to outshine the dingy surroundings and overloaded elevators. While familiar personalities were part of the show – people like actors Amy Howard Wilson, Lisa Ortiz and Brett Weaver, publisher C.B. Cebulski, translator Neil Nadelman, producers Jeff Thompson and Shin Kurokawa, artists Bruce Lewis, Steve Bennett, J. Torres, Takeshi Miyazawa, and Robert DeJesus (who was married at the convention), and animator Scott Frazier (who performed the marriage), Anime Central featured people who were making their first convention appearances.

While many North American anime fans prefer the bright voices of Japanese actors, those actors have been the rarest of guests of honor at North American conventions. That may have been one of the reasons that the appearance of Yuko Kagata at Anime Central proved to be so popular, even though she had accumulated only a handful of roles by the time she traveled to Illinois (Haruna in *Corrector Yui* was her most prominent role). That voice had fans cheering when she did no more than greet the convention with a cheerful "Good Morning!" at the opening ceremonies. Fans were delighted by Kagata's cheerful, high-pitched voice and her tendency to wear costumes at convention events. And Kagata enjoyed those fans, saying that Japanese fans tend to be more shy and American fans are more open. "Japanese fans try to find out things about me and not talk about themselves," she said.

Kagata said that she's an anime fan who always wanted to be a voice actor. "If I'm surprised, I might come out with an anime character reaction. My friends often say that I act like I popped out from some anime." Acting might seem like fun from the outside, but she's found that it's hard work on the inside. Since Japanese animation is produced before the voices are recorded, Kagata has to adjust her performance based on the amount of time each character speaks on screen. "Each character has a set amount of lip-flap time. You can grasp if a character is a slow speaker or a fast speaker," said Kagata.

The convention also was visited by an actor who started with *Robotech* and never looked back. Wendee Lee, who began her anime dubbing career with Vanessa in *Robotech*, moved on to roles such as Faye Valentine in *Cowboy Bebop* and Kei in the latest dub of *Akira*. At one point, Lee was directing and acting in episodes of two anime series at the same time – *Outlaw Star* and *Digimon*. "*Outlaw Star*, that was a very tricky show," Lee said. "It was all done at night, and I was also directing *Digimon* during the day. We would get a little giddy at times. We would get a lot of crazy because it was at night – we'd say "I just hit the wall, it's time for tea.""

Lee sounded sad about the anime dub that got away, the English-language version of *Tonde Buurin*. She said that a North American company had purchased the rights to the show about a girl who turns into a pink crime-fighting pig, and all of the episodes had been dubbed – then the production company lost the rights. The *Tonde Buurin* episodes still sit on a shelf, ready to be released, she said. "It turned out incredibly adorable. It's a very sweet show and it would be perfect for young kids," said Lee.

Older kids love *Gundam Wing* and *Dragon Ball*, and fans got to enjoy two English-language actors from those series. Scott McNeil, the first-season Piccolo in *Dragon Ball Z* and Duo Maxwell in the *Gundam Wing* dub, came across as an intensely humorous person who was always "on." A comment from McNeil always seemed to include three jokes and six voices. "There's something defective in my brain. Doing what I do is something that keeps me out of a rubber room," McNeil joked. He observed that Maxwell is "...a little sarcastic and a little like me," and that "Piccolo's emotions come from a human place, he's not an alien even though he's green."

Morrow, Trowa Barton in *Gundam Wing* and Goku in *Dragon Ball Z*, said he turned Barton into a dark and brooding character as *Gundam Wing* progressed, while he screamed the Goku part all through *Dragon Ball*. One of Morrow's favorite anime dubbing roles was Van Fanel in *Vision of Escaflowne*, saying "...had that struggle in life and a love that he was interested in. Everyone has a person like that in their life."

The convention also saw a collection of first-class artists. Yoshitoshi Abe, designer of the characters in *Serial Experiments Lain*, continued to decline to explain the enigmatic series – but he said that *Lain* was so emotionally dark that the producers had to come up with the *NieA Under Seven* comedy so they could do something different. Despite Range Murata's beast designs being computerized for *Blue Submarine No. 6*, Murata said he still prefers to draw on paper. Mika Akitaka, who has designed mecha for three *Gundam* series, admitted that real Gundams aren't possible with today's metals because they would collapse under their own weight. And Kia Asamiya, creator of *Silent Moebius*, said he wouldn't want to live in *Moebius*' fictional world of supernatural monsters – but that world makes for great stories.

Anime Central won't have to worry about their future location; before the 2001 convention was held, the organizers had signed a contract to move the event to the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, nicknamed the "Hyatt *Macross*" for its flamboyant architecture, on April 19-21, 2002.

Pictures by Kevin Lillard. For more information: www.fansview.com and www.acen.org.

Kevin Bradley Randell (Order # 53033483)

# CONVENTION REPORT: ANIMAZEMENT

Animazement took a major chance in 2001. In order to move to a larger hotel in Durham, North Carolina, the convention had to abandon its mid-March dates and move to the last weekend of May. That change placed Animazement on the Memorial Day weekend, and put the convention in a crowded part of the schedule – two weeks after Anime Central in Illinois, on the same weekend as Anime North in Toronto and one week before Project: A-Kon in Texas. But Animazement had something those other conventions didn't have: Yu Watase, one of the most popular guests in North American fandom. The result was a convention that was a Watase lovefest that drew a big crowd.

Watase, the creator of the *Fushigi Yugi* and *Ayashi no Ceres* manga series, was cheered at the opening ceremonies and got a standing ovation at her panels. Fans packed a big room to hear her speak about her works, then peppered her with questions about their favorite Watase characters. And those fans then formed long lines to get Watase's autograph and have their picture taken with the artist. Sometimes the artist insisted on the pictures. During Watase's presentation on Animazement's first day, she was answering fan questions when she interrupted the panel and motioned to the back of the room. Standing there were two young women who had made some elaborately diaphanous costumes of Ceres characters. Watase was so struck by those costumes that she insisted that the women come to the front of the room and immediately have their pictures taken with her. Watase has moved beyond *Fushigi* and *Ceres* to start new series, and feels her work gets better with time. "If I look back on my old work, it's not as polished as my current work... I like my current work the best." she said.

Other Japanese artists who were Animazement guests were Koichi Tsunoda, drawing director for *Devilman*, *Mazinger Z* and *Uchuu Senkan Yamato*; and Yasuo Yamaguchi, director of *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarou*, *Getta Robo* and *Devilman*. Tsukasa Kotobuki, the character designer for *Saber Marionette J* and *Battle Arena Toshinden*, had some fascinating and frank observations about his profession. "The Japanese animation industry is in dismal shape. Sometimes I think it would be better for animation to be made in the United States," Kotobuki said. "But I think you would rather see Japanese animation, so consider this a complaint from an insider." Kotobuki spoke openly about disputes in the production of *Saber Marionette* that had the series' writer at odds with the series director about the direction the show should take. He said he also didn't get along with the *Toshinden* game producer about whether the game action or the character designs were responsible for the game's success.

Kotobuki also had some very kind words about North American fans. "A lot of U.S. fans watch the shows and are fans of the shows. With Japanese fans I'm surprised if they watch the work and are fans." Kotobuki said he worried that too many Japanese anime fans were cajoled by their friends into liking shows they didn't like just to go along with a group.

Animazement saw a rare conjunction between the Japanese-language and English-language voice acting worlds. Akira Kamiya, the 54-year-old actor who has been the voice of Saeba Ryo in *City Hunter* and Kenshiro in *Hokuto no Ken*, appeared on the same panel with Scott Houle, the founder of Coastal Carolina Studios, producer of English-language anime dubs. The common part of both schools of acting is that both kind of performances are "dubs," because Japanese animation is produced before voice tracks are recorded. But the panel discussion showed that the differences between the worlds go beyond mere language. Houle said that he'll spend months producing a dub, including the time coaching actors on the way to perform their roles and get each line to fit perfectly in the time that their characters' lips move on screen. Kamiya said that anime recording sessions are done as quickly as possible and that all of the voice tracks for a show can be recorded in two brief sessions. Houle's actors record their lines in individual sessions while Kamiya's parts are recorded ensemble-style with all of the actors on hand at once. "Some of the busier actors in Japan might record two or three shows a day," Kamiya said, to which Houle replied, "That's crazy." Fans of the original Japanese voices were intrigued to hear Kamiya say that "there are some shows that are just slapped together. There may not be much of a production effort."

While Animazement had some fresh voice acting faces as guests (Rick Forrester, Tony Schnur, and Amy Tipton, all voices on *Virtua Fighter*) the hottest name at the event had to be Pamela Weidner, who followed up her Skuld in *Oh My Goddess* with Mayumi Kino, the female lead in *Blue Submarine No. 6*. Houle had mentioned that Weidner got that role despite being the last person on a list of candidates for the part.

The *Blue Sub* role offered a special challenge for Coastal Carolina Studios, which handled the English-language dub. Typically, Coastal wants their actors to know the entire plot line of a series, so they can modulate their voice performances to reflect a character's changes in a series. But with *Blue Sub*, the last episodes were still in production as Coastal started dubbing the first episode. "It was a challenge to handle, to make it different," Weidner recalled. "We had no clue – we went an episode at a time. We were arguing about what was going to happen in the final episode."

**Director Yasuo Yamaguchi**

**Artist Tsukasa Kotobuki**

**Actor Akira Kamiya**

**Above: Dub Director Scott Houle**
**Below: Actor Pamela Weidner**

Pictures by Kevin Lillard. For more information: www.fansview.com and www.animazement.org

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# CONVENTION REPORT: ANIME NORTH

**The Sailor JAM-boree Girls!**

**Studio Ironcat crew: Doug Smith (left) & Kevin Bennett (right).**

***Johnny Bravo*'s creator, Van Partible, at Teletoon table**

**Above: The models exposition. Below: Peter Esztelecky, a *Porco Rosso* costumers, in the dealers' room**

Anime North celebrated its fifth year this year and was held from May 25th to 27th 2001 at the Marriott Hotel (close to Pearson International Airport) on the outskirts of the friendly city of Toronto. Many fans from the USA crossed the border to attend the convention as well! With each passing year, the attendance has been steadily climbing and the hotel was truly crowded with thousands of people (well over 2,000 attendees the entire weekend). I had a hard time walking straight because so many people were in front of me! Unfortunately the weather wasn't great (always raining or overcast), but we were indoors and kept ourselves busy with fun at the Dealers Room, the gaming area, video viewing, art show and the masquerade! The dance and masquerade, in particular, were very well received. The volunteers all did a fantastic job putting the convention together for the fans this year — especially since the attendance was so high (the first day broke the previous year's entire weekend count).

This year's Japanese guests were Shinpei Itoh (creator of the *Hyperdolls* manga, published here by Studio Ironcat) and his wife Mio Odagi, who is a manga artist as well as having worked for Ippongi Bang. They could be found at the Ironcat table located in the Dealers Room, meeting with the fans and giving out sketches and autographs. Personally, I really enjoyed meeting with them. My, Mio-san's hair is so very long! (As long as she is tall, my goodness!). Everyday she wore a different kimono to the show and her Japanese Shrine Maiden (Miko) style costume was really awesome! The fans enjoyed looking at a real Miko-style outfit just like many anime characters — such as Sakura from *Urusei Yatsura* — wear. Since both of them are very familiar with North American anime conventions, they were really at ease and seemed to be having a lot of fun — aside from their trip to Niagara Falls!

Local television station CFMT-International was there to report on Anime North 2001 and the Japanimation phenomenon in Canada (and the US as well). The Toronto based station runs all sorts of different cultural programming in various languages (because Canada is considered a "mosaic" of different ethnic groups). Their Japanese language program *Wai Wai Wide* was represented by reporter Yukiko Nakamura and I was able to speak with her. I was even shown on TV! Personally, it was a great joy to talk with her, although she seemed a little overwhelmed with the thousands of anime fans throughout the hotel. Incidentally, Ms. Nakamura interviewed the legendary Hayao Miyazaki at the Toronto International Film Festival a few years back and said that she felt that *Princess Mononoke* is definitely not for children with its scenes of violence. Other TV stations were also represented: Teletoon and *Johnny Bravo* creator Van Partible were on hand; Global Televisions' *Game Nation* were there to promote the *Final Fantasy* movie (and even advertised the convention on their show).

Another local celebrity, Dr. David Stephenson, was present as well, and like last year he was there to explain to anime fans about physics and what would really happen if giant robots existed and if someone was inside one during a fight in space. In his words, the pilots would have to be strapped in to compensate for zero gravity. I asked him what he thought of 60 years-old Dennis Tito, the first space tourist, flying in the Russian rocket. While pleased with this event, Dr. Stephenson said he has mixed feelings. He thinks it's great mainly because it upset NASA and the bureaucrats, which he dislikes very much. If you have any scientific questions, please write to Dr. Stephenson and he can give information on what would really happen in space! Dr. David Stephenson, PO Box 281 Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0. Could robots really fight in space?

This convention's biggest attraction was probably, of course, Tristen Citrine and the Sailor Jamboree girls! So many fans were lining up to see their performance. Tristen's real day job is at the Aladdin Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, so we could tell immediately that the Sailor Jamboree gals are real pros!

Do you know who Fred Ladd is? I was really honoured to meet with him in person at the convention. Fred is a pioneer in the release of anime on North American television, being the director of adapting and distributing *Astroboy* (Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan Atom*), *Gigantor*, *Speed Racer* and *Kimba the White Lion* in the 1960's. In the 80's he worked on Ted Turner's version of *Gatchaman* (*G-Force*) and he is still recently involved in anime, having been a creative consultant on *Sailor Moon*. Although he is certainly getting on in years, he is young at heart and has tremendous energy, still continuing to direct and produce. He brought a real treat to the convention — the un-aired pilot episode of the *Astroboy* series. He also enthralled the crowd with some anecdotes regarding Japan's God of Manga, Dr. Osamu Tezuka. Fred Ladd was also presented an award from Anime North during a special brunch regarding his lifelong contribution to anime. I truly wish that Tezuka were still alive to see how far the anime phenomenon has gone today in North America.

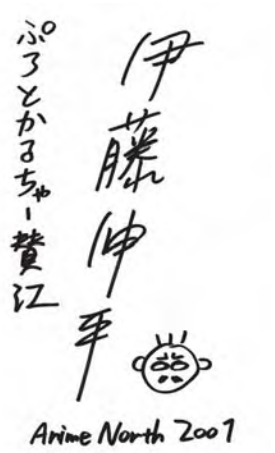
Well, the three days passed so very quickly indeed! Time flies like an arrow when we are having fun, right? I'd like to congratulate con-chair Tamara 'Tam-Xena' MacDonald on the excellent job she did in organizing this year's event — and in raising over $2000 for the Sick Children's Hospital with the various charity events! See you next year, May 24-26 at the Royal Constellation Hotel — right across the street from the Marriott.

Pictures by Miyako Matsuda & Claude J. Pelletier. For more information: www.animenorth.com/.

Kinokuniya Bookstore Bundoll (Order - 53033488)

# ANIME NORTH: ANECDOTES FROM SHIMPEI ITOH & MIO ODAGI

At Anime North 2001, Mr. Shimpei Itoh was the guest of honour, alongside his lovely wife Ms. Mio Odagi. It was their first trip to Canada. During those three days of the convention — thanks to Steven and Kevin Bennett from Studio Ironcat, a meeting was arranged for me to talk with them in person. At the Second Cup cafe I could gather quite a few anecdotes to share with you readers. Itoh is best known as the creator of the manga *Hyper Dolls* from Studio Ironcat (incidentally Itoh wrote and drew a 4 page manga for the *Hyper Doll* graphic novel of his own experiences at Project A-con in Texas). I can tell you that he's just as funny as his works. Also at a panel, Leonard Kirk, the regular artist for *Super Girl*, was present to compare Japanese manga and industry with American comics.




First of all, Itoh and Odagi went to Niagara Falls to see how big the place was. It really impressed them to no end, let me tell you! Of course Japan is very small and the sights there are as equally small, so there is nothing like the Falls over there. Unfortunately the weather was indifferent during their trip and Itoh remarked, "Gee, the weather here seems to change so fast...sun, cloud, rain — all in one day!"

We spoke at the cafe and, to tell the truth, all of us ended up talking about movies. Itoh is a movie buff and he can probably recite anime scenes and their original references. He said, "I adore Japan's legendary movie director Akira Kurosawa. I wonder if he was alive today, born and raised with computers, games and all that, what kind of movies would he make? I'm extremely curious. By the way, do you remember the scene from *Evangelion* the Movie when Asuka attacks the Angels with spears? When I first saw that scene my brain immediately recognized it from a scene in the *Seven Samurai*. You know, a character called Kikuchiyo pulls the arrows and keeps attacking the bandits. When I saw Asuka I kept screaming Kikuchiyo, Kikuchiyo!" If you haven't seen the *Seven Samurai*, please do.

Itoh has been in the Japanese manga industry for a long time. He made his debut during his college days and on that topic he said, "One day I just picked up the phone and called the publisher to visit and present my work. I was quite lucky to be accepted." His wife Mio said, "Many Shoujo manga magazines offer manga contests so I sent my manga works to different publishers — in fact 11 times, and I won small prize money six times. Then luckily an acquaintance of mine happened to be a friend of Ippongi Bang so I became her assistant. Then I got to know the industry people and eventually I made my debut."

IF YOU LET IT BE, IT'LL CONSUME THE ENTIRE PLANET!
HOW CAN WE STOP IT?
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE!
THEN DO IT ALREADY!
MY, MY...
I'M SORRY, I MEANT "PLEASE DO IT ALREADY"!
BY THE WAY...
WHO ARE YOU TWO?
THE HYPER DOLLS!
WE'RE LIKE SUPER HEROES OF JUSTICE!

Not like American comics, which is team effort of inkers, pencillers, colourists and writers, Japanese manga creators in general do the entire work with the help of assistants. Itoh said, "As you know, Japanese manga magazines are quite cheap for purchase and if we have to share the profit with inkers and such, our profits would shrink!" Also, Itoh and his wife added that these days the art style between manga and anime has become indistinct; in other words, if anyone wants to become a manga artist today he/she has to learn the anime style. Even in the Shounen manga genre there are quite a few female artists such as Rumiko Takahashi, and many original artists are hoping to keep the rights to create its anime version if the manga proves popular.

Incidentally, both of them, especially Odagi, really loves the original *Astroboy* and they were pleased to meet with Fred Ladd in person at the convention. Itoh added, "Young people should watch more classical movies and anime!" Since both of them love visiting North American conventions, you fans will certainly be seeing them often in the future.

**Shinpei Itoh & Mio Odagi at their panel**

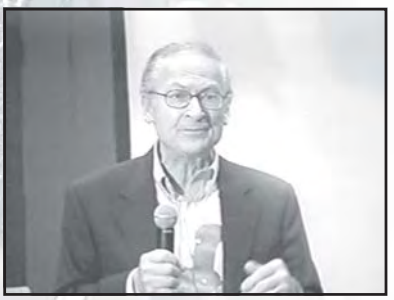
**Shinpei Itoh & Mio Odagi at Studio Ironcat table**

**Shinpei Itoh & Mio Odagi in the dealers' room**

Pictures by Miyako Matsuda & Claude J. Pelletier.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

# ANIME NORTH: RIGHT SAID, FRED: AN INTERVIEW WITH FRED LADD



"Anime North has been a REAL eye opener for me," said Fred Ladd, with genuine surprise. He beamed with pride as he recalled what he'd observed. "I'm seeing crowds here beyond anything I'd expected to see, and I think even the organizers are overwhelmed by the massive turnout."

At Anime North 2001 I had the pleasure of meeting THE pioneer in importing anime to North America. Fred Ladd, for those who were living on Mars from Beatlemania onward, is the man responsible for creating *Astroboy*, the English adaptation of Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan Atom*, waaaaay back in '62. Fred was a venerated guest of honour at Anime North, and the experience left an indelible impression on him. The immense deluge of fan turn out fazed everyone. "It shows you what has happened; whereas anime began as a kind of cult thing, an underground thing — in a nice way. We've come 180 degrees since." Those who were just infants back in the golden age of anime, are now adults with kids of their own. Some of these fans, now part of the mainstream, have become animators themselves and influencing the very medium that was once dominated by the Imperial Mouse. As evident in recent films such as Disney's *Atlantis* — unnervingly familiar to fans of *Nadia, Secret of Blue Water* — it seems that turnabout is fair play. "Instead of being copied by the Japanese, they are now copying the Japanese style. And you are not fashionable if you don't have a Japanese look to the animation; you're square, you're old-fashioned."

During a Celebrity Brunch, Fred was presented the Momiji Award for Lifetime Achievement, with deepest gratitude for his valuable role in bringing Japanese animation to an international audience. "Totally unexpected; I had no idea. It's a beautiful thing," he remarked, holding the transparent obelisk proudly before passing it to a committee member. "Don't drop it, son," he smiled. Before a group of well wishers that included most of the Guests of Honour at Anime North, as well as a representative from the Japanese consulate, Fred spoke fondly of a man who had great impact on his career. Fred told the story of a young man who went on to popularize anime in Japan through his equally popular manga characters. "The one guy I would have liked to have seen here today is the guy who... is the real star: Osamu Tezuka...This one's for you."

Oft honoured as Japan's God of Manga, Tezuka was "A genius, by my estimation", said Fred Ladd candidly during a private interview. "Osamu Tezuka, who got out of college with a doctor's degree, came out after graduation and said, "wait a minute I don't want to operate on people, I think I just want to draw". And he created a character called Tetsuwan Atom, a little boy robot modeled after Pinocchio who he loved in those days. And I did too."

Far from the bustling crowds, we had made our way to the Con Suite where we could talk in quiet. A man of interminable experience, he spoke enthusiastically about what is considered to be the ushering in of Anime's Golden Age. I asked him how he managed to get Japanese animation to America where it was never intended to be shown. "At that time, NBC Enterprises — not the NBC Network as a lot of people mistakenly believe — had a rep in Tokyo who was sitting in a hotel room... he had the TV on and he saw some strange things and said, "I don't recognize these cartoons." Well, it was *Tetsuwan Atom*. He got on the phone and he called headquarters back in New York, and asked them to get Fred Ladd."

At that time Fred was involved in a little animated project called *Pinocchio in Outer Space* which came about because he, like Tezuka, liked *Pinocchio* — something of which NBC was well aware. On top of that, Fred had already dubbed many European cartoons under the successful Cartoon Classics banner. So it made sense that he would be asked to give *Tetsuwan Atom* an American makeover. "Could this be another little *Pinocchio*? We looked at a few shows and I said, "he's not Pinocchio, I'm not sure what he is, but I'll know as I get more into it. Let's make a couple of pilots,"" he explained. The first, *The Birth of Astroboy* had nearly spent the whole duration of the piece explaining all the characters that it lacked room for action. That missing ingredient was left to the second pilot, *Expedition to Mars*. From those, NBC felt they had a winner and commissioned the dubbing of the next 104 TV episodes into English.

A fateful meeting with Tezuka in '64 came about in the midst of heavy production of *Astroboy* episodes, because aspects of the show were running afoul with American television standards. It was an education in cultural understanding, as Fred discovered inherent problems, things they had not anticipated. "One [episode] dealt with vivisection; we had a mad scientist who was experimenting — that's a taboo subject. We don't show that in a kid's show. Another show had a bachelor, who was like the classical Oscar Wilde character, Dorian Gray. On the walls of his apartment, there were a lot of pictures of women — nude! By the time we would cut out all those pictures we'd wind up with a 10 second show." There were six offending shows to be excised and the news of impending censorship did not please their creator, Tezuka. But despite the difficulty, Fred was able to convince him that four episodes could be salvaged with some tinkering. When Tezuka finally saw the completed English version of the entire series he was relieved and pleased that the Americans were not tampering with his art. Tezuka, in fact, enjoyed the modifications.

"For example, the opening song — there was not an opening song in the Japanese version — we had kids singing the song, because that's the American style... That delighted him. We gave the characters comical names that he had never contemplated, especially one character called Mr. Pompous. Don't ask me why, that name just delighted him. Every time he heard it he would laugh. So he was enchanted by the English version, after fearing that it might be bastardized, if you please." As a result Tezuka wound up changing his policies, and from that series onward he would write more toward American lines. This marked the first time an English adaptation would influence the original. According to Fred, Fuji TV was also quite satisfied with the modifications, which eventually worked to everyone's advantage.

Pictures by Keith Dawe and Miyako Matsuda.

Kirsty Bradley Bardell (Order: 53033483)

# ANIME NORTH: INTERVIEW WITH FRED LADD (Cont.) / ASAKA DAWE'S DIARY

Now, through a fluky set of events the entire English version, *Astroboy*, was destroyed. This was common practice in the 60s when, after the run was completed, it had to be returned to Japan; however, the original company in Japan had gone bankrupt. The only option was to destroy it. But it must have been through providence that just a few weeks prior to Anime North 2001, while going through his files and reorganizing in preparation, Fred came across a print of *Expedition to Mars* thought not to have been seen for nearly 40 years. He had it meticulously restored and remounted, bringing the treasure to be shown as an exclusive to the convention.

I thanked Mr. Ladd for his time with me and for his enthusiasm for anime that has spanned 40 years; his contribution has made anime fandom what it is today. For a final word, I asked him about his stay in the Host City for Anime North. "Toronto is one of my favourite cities in the world. I've been here a few times; one was back in the 50s. Yes, I'm not the new kid on the block... Our feeling was the town had a lot of quaint charm you certainly didn't see in New York. A delightful place." Circa '82, he made a repeat visit to adapt the Japanese anime version of *The Wizard of Oz*, before returning once again this year. "Toronto is, the short time I've been here, a very cosmopolitan city, second to none... This trip back has been a real eye opener for me."

## Asaka Dawe's Diary

**Saturday May 26th**: Alcohol Unit: What? Does Anime North serve alcohol? Cigarettes: Zero Calories: 800 (I missed the Saturday Brunch. Darn!)

**9:00 am:** Keith and Aaron who are writers for Protoculture, and their friend Drew have already arrived at Anime North. I couldn't go with them because I slept in, but I had to do the laundry first; otherwise, I'd have to buy extra underwear! But before doing any housework, I have to eat breakfast: croissant, omelet, salad...perfect! This is a secret from my husband.

**1:30 pm:** As I don't have a car, I had to go to the Marriott Hotel by transit. Here is St. Clair West Station, but no buses show up while I wait. And where are all the young people who are supposed to be going to Anime North? Hmmm.

**2:30 pm:** Finally, when I arrived at the hotel, I found Miyako who is the chief editor of the same magazine. Guess what? She was interviewed for *Wai Wai Wide* (a TV program in Toronto for Japanese people). I saw her as a big promoter when she introduced Protoculture. After that Miyako and I met up with Shimpei Itoh and his wife Mio Odagi. Both are cartoonists but their styles are different. Shimpei's style is more American Superhero rather than typical Japanese, while Mio draws in the cute shoujo style similar to *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Half*. As she wore such a pretty kimono, I appreciated her service spirit; she probably had to bring an extra Boston bag packed with kimono stuff.

**About 9:00 pm:** Keith and his friend, Dave met with Rick Green the host of *History Bites* (and a former regular on the silly Red Green Show). His daughter appeared in the masquerade dressed as Deedlit from *Lodoss War*.

**Sunday May 27**: Alcohol Unit: Zero. Cigarettes: Actually, I don't smoke. Calories: 1500 (Katsudon and donuts).

**2:00 pm:** Keith, Aaron and I met Fred Ladd who introduced *Astroboy*. Yesterday I saw his workshop; I was surprised that he knows anime so well because in the 60s Japan was a developing country, no technology, and nobody was interested in its culture. He must have had foresight! Though even he didn't predict the anime boom of today. When I saw him at first he seemed unapproachable, but actually he's a really sincere person. I asked him what he thought was the difference between American and Japanese animation and he answered quite politely. About what he said, you'll read in his published interview. Anyway, thank you Fred.

**About 4:00 pm:** Last year I didn't know what to expect when I came to Anime North. So this time I got the program book right away. Unexpectedly, I joined as a guest on a couple of panels; one was on Shoujo manga and another on cultural differences. Both of them welcomed me as a commentator and as I had planned be just a member of the audience, I was surprised. But the encouragement of both the other guests and the audience helped me a lot, so I really enjoyed the workshop. I had explained that Mahoshoujo (e.g. *Sailor Moon*) originated from the old 60s show *Bewitched*. Halfway through, Mio Odagi joined us. She told us that recently Shoujo and Shounen manga is becoming borderless. It's true that some Shounen stuff has more sensitivity than even Shoujo. We no longer use the term "chick flick". As Boys stuff is more and more sentimental, those left watching Shoujo will need a Bud Light.

At the Cultural Differences panel, many Torontonians joined the audience. The leader, Lupin (not really Lupin IV but he can dream) was very welcoming. Many anime fans may wonder why the protagonist behaves the way he or she does in Japanese anime. Their behaviour is sometimes strange compared to what a Westerner might do in the same situation. I often have the same questions when I watch Hollywood films. For me, seeing the reverse side, a different perspective is very refreshing. And most people like anime because it realistically reflects society while American cartoons are heavily censored. Most Japanese children know sex and violence through anime or drama, whether good or bad. How do North American kids learn about it? Through *South Park*? We learned much about our differences. If I have a chance I may explore this fully in a future article. Anyway, thank you Kat Williams (Shoujo hostess) and Lupin. See you all next year!

**Miyako, Keith, Asaka and *Wai Wai Wide*'s Yukiko Nakamura**

**Asaka with some *Dragonball* characters!**

**Above: Keith interviews Rick Green; Below: Asaka & Mio Odagi at the Cultural Difference panel**

**Below, the whole gang: (rear row) Keith, Drew, Aaron (front) Asaka, Francine & Miyako**

Pictures by Keith Dawe and Claude J. Pelletier.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# THE MODERN JAPANESE MUSIC DATABASE (PART 11)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## FAQ 11: The Idolatrous 80s

Though idol singers had been high profile since the Fifties, the Decade of the Idol has certainly been the 80s. It was both their triumph and swan song, at least in their classic form. They entered the period dominant and, other than a brief blip, exited it supreme. Two things made the difference. First was the use of modern marketing techniques to saturate mass media culture to a depth not achieved in the past. The artist's face and name were seen and known everywhere. This was coupled with, second, the professionalization of the idol making industry to new levels. Having had 25 years to hone their craft, the kingmakers were able to successfully stage and advertise one beautiful or handsome star after another, until the idol sound and style was "The Thing" in mass culture. Fans were convinced they had to follow every tiny detail of these artists, lives, and collected it voraciously. By the end of the decade, their faces were omnipresent in music, movies, TV, magazines, and the ads that accompany them. Seiko Matsuda, who became the undisputed queen of idol singers, led them to the top. Her career showed marketers how much money could be made by properly advertising a famous face in all media possible.

The idol field, however, was being heavily influenced by the gravity caused by the New Music's rising star, which in the early 80s took in over half the records sold. In response, idols began recording more diversely styled and composed music, as well as branching out on lyrical topics. Idol singers became less packaged and more personalities with distinct opinions, particularly in the late 80s. The lasting result of this has been totally blurred boundaries between idols, pop, and rock, with singers drifting across the spectrum in lyrics, performance, and music. Idols could appear as artists as easily as the reverse.

The blip mentioned earlier occurred circa 86 to 89 when legitimate rock bands briefly burst up from the underground live clubs to claim the mainstream. Unlike bands of prior decades, they sounded Japanese more than Western and put deeper work into the entertainment quotient of their live shows. Paralleling the group sounds boom of the 60s, bands popped up all around the country; some of them became famous very quickly via shows like Groovy Band Heaven. Not down for the count, however, the idol industry immediately responded by putting out idol versions of these bands. The result was a market swamped by so much mediocrity that the band sound lost its appeal, dragging down the real artists with it. Many of these talented musicians ironically ended up playing their instruments as back up to the dominant idols of the decade's close.

The seeds for the destruction of the classic idols, however, were already growing by mid decade. The brief band boom was a symptom of a deeper problem: people wanted more diversity. The New Music movement was still running, and joining it were a growing plethora of underground subcultures. One of the largest was metal, particularly glam metal. Two groups, EZO [produced by Gene Simmons of KISS] and Loudness, managed to tour in North America. Underground music was flowing from the local scenes in Osaka and the Shibuya district of Tokyo, letting loose bands like Shonen Knife and Pizzicato 5. A third area, which would explode in the 90s, was an underground rave scene with its attendant DJ culture. It took a long time for such movements to become popular, however, as they were ignored by hit music TV shows like Music Station, which came on the air in the late 80s and still thrives today.

**Notable Artists**: **Enka**: Yuriko Futaba, Sayuri Ishikawa, Hiroshi Itsuki, Akiko Kanazawa, Soburo Kitajima, Michiya Mihashi, Haruo Minami, Harumi Miyako, Shinichi Mori, Hideo Murata, Aki Yashiro. **Ethnic**: The Boom. **Idol**: Cool Kid Gang, Hikaru Genji, Shizuka Kudo, Seiko Matsuda, Chisato Moritaka, Akina Nakamori, Miho Nakayama, Yoko Oginome, Tanokin Trio, Wink, Momoe Yamaguchi. **Hard Rock**: Passengers, Sheena & The Rocketts, Show Ya. **New Music**: Eichi Otaki, Motoharu Sano, Southern All Stars. **Pop**: Alfee, Alice, Kome Kome Club, Monta & Brothers, Safety Zone, Mariya Takeuchi, Tulip, Tube. **Retro-50s**: Hound Dog. **Rock**: Bakufu Slump, Blue Hearts, Checkers, Anzen Chitai, Jun Skywalker, Princess Princess, Rebecca, Street Sliders, Tama, Vow Wows. **Techno Pop**: TM Network, Yellow Magic Orchestra.

**Next**: FAQ 12: The Exploding Nineties.

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# THE MODERN JAPANESE MUSIC DATABASE (PART 11 — Continued)

## Archive 02: Seikima-2

Our world was invaded by demons seeking complete satanic conquest, but it wasn't a preview of *Urotsuki Doji* part 15. It was living proof we should've sent Kiss to tour Japan a few more times.

Seikima-2 was the vehicle, constructed by Demon Kogure, for the advancement of satanic religion. Known to His followers as "Your Excellency," and in Hell Realm as Satan, this founder of The Religion is over 100,000 years old, as were all band members, was born in the capital of Hell, Bitter Valley District, and weighs 50,000 tons. His blood type is A666. He appeared on Earth in human disguise and was investigating our culture at a university when, in 1982, he summoned the Director of Hell CIA, Ace Shimazu, to aid his plans. How should demons corrupt human society? Form a rock band, obviously, and reveal the Satanic Sutras to the world.

Demon took vocals and Ace picked up the guitar. The latter was born in God's Door in Hell. The summoning didn't take long, as he was already on Earth disguised as a human in another band. Soon, His Highness, Raiden Yuzawa, the Son of the Thunder God, came forth from Great Mountain Island in Hell to play drums. He weighs in at 45,000 tons. A priest from the Cultural Bureau of Hell, Xenon Ishikawa, came forth to play bass. Finally, a second guitarist was found in Sergeant Luke Takamura, the chief of the Military Bureau of Hell, where he'd been in charge of 100,000 Elder Brothers. Both the later are absurdly old and heavy, too. At least two other demons, Jail Ohashi and Zud Hashijima, had helped in early years, but their Dedication to the Task wasn't sufficient and they disappeared.

Despite how this sounds, it was all a well humored joke inspired by Kiss. Unlike the latter band, which got upset with reporters for trying to photograph their real faces, when Japanese reporters caught Seikima without makeup they had a tongue in cheek response. The human faces were makeup designed so they could walk freely amongst mortals and investigate the culture for more effective ways of subversion; what looked like makeup was, in fact, their real faces.

From it's debut in 85, the band played hard, crunchy, growling metal with Demon going off into screeches as if trying to tear off with his teeth the front grill of a moving truck. Part way through their career they appeared on a TV program pitting one singer against another of a completely different musical style, making them sing each other's songs. It turned out that Demon had a lush, powerful, penetrating voice that had been hidden by what Seikima normally did. Viewers were astonished and wanted more. From that point on, they began including songs that were less thrashy, had more melody, and the occasional power ballad, while still not losing their classic metallion grind. The band's popularity was also helped by their open self-parody. Demon, for example, appeared in a camera commercial in full regalia as the Lord of Hell, chasing a terrified chicken back and forth, to catch it so a that cute little Japanese girl could take a picture. Yet, at the same time, they kept up a fake sternness about their Hell-born task: the band is The Religion, their concerts are Black Masses, their CDs are Major Sutras, singles are Minor Sutras, and videos are Visual Sutras. Everyone is in on the joke.

In actuality, Demon has become a well-known culture critic on the radio and commentator on sumo wrestling matches, as well as having an active commercial career. He's a very friendly and intelligent man who knew he was putting on an act for entertainment value, rarely getting through a "terrifying demon routine" in an interview without breaking a smile and letting loose with a good-natured laugh. He enjoyed talking in English with Western guests when they appeared on the shows. His language ability allowed him to converse with artists he admired in his youth, such as Brian Ferry. The other members tended to be window dressing during interviews. Ace is now widely recognized for his guitar talent, often doing solo work, writing and producing for other artists. Sgt. Luke is active on radio, TV, music production, and even does some literary writing. Xenon likes to experiment with funk and jazz-fusion music on the side. All of these extra interests are good, as the band decided its mission was complete at the stroke of 2000. The Sutras having been revealed, the foundation of the Mass laid, it was time for the members to go their individual ways across the Earth to prepare for the coming final darkness.

**Major Sutras**: *Akuma Ga Kitarite Heavy Metal*; *End of the Century*; *From Hell With Love*; *Big Time Changes*; *Outer Mission*; *Worst*; *Harmful Rock*; *Ai To Gyakusa Tsu No Hibi*; *Live: Black Mass in London*; *Restaurant of Fear*; *Ponk*; *Portrait of Mephistopheles*; *News*; *Move*; *1999 Blacklist*.

**Visual Sutras**: *Satan's Black Mass*; *Satan's Visual Sutra*; *Outer Mission*; *Japan Budoukon Worst Black Mass Tour*; *Harmless*; *Super Harmful Tour*; *Monster Rhythm Battle*; *European State of Emergency*; *Humane Society* [contains anime]; *Rock & Roll Dynamite*; *Mawariyahare*; *Complete Satanic Advance*.

**Official Site**: http://www.bmgjapan.com/seikima2/top.html [music demos]

**Next**: we've surveyed the field from dance to pop to rock to metal, so how do you learn more? FAQ 13: Sources 1

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

## APOCALYPSE ZERO (VHS), VOL. 1-2 ★★★☆

Some people in a convention, a few years ago, had told us about this anime. They had seemed to consider *Kakugo No Susume* (the original Japanese title) to be one of the weirdest (and somewhat sickest) pieces of anime they had ever seen. Were they ever right! A mix between Osamu Tezuka's cute stuff, Go Nagai's most horrible nightmares (say *Violence Jack* ) and the Sentai shows of the 1970's (*Kamen Rider* , etc.), *Apocalypse Zero* takes a hold of you and doesn't let go for the duration. Cool character designs, bizarre monsters (REALLY bizarre!), dynamic animation and a jaw-clenching (albeit simple minded and strangely narrated) story make this one a must see. However, some scenes in there are truly stomach churning and your five year-old brother should exit the room if you want to watch this one. Last comment: Claude had to buy this one so that we could review it. Some companies are so cheap that they don't bother sending screeners; if we don't receive it, we can't review it. But we HAD to tell you about this one...

AnimeWorks, Cat.# AWVS-0011/AWVD-12, Subtitled/Dubbed, 45 min. ea., $24.95ea., 16+

| Designs: | **4** | Animation: | **3.5** | Soundtrack: | **3** | Story: | **2.5** | Translation: | **3.5** | Average: | **3.5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## CREST OF THE STARS (DVD), VOL. 1 ★★★☆

Of all the TV series put out by Sunrise in the last few years (and there have been a lot), *Seikai No Monshou* (the original Japanese title) is one of the most impressive. Although quite short with its thirteen episodes, this little TV series packs all the storytelling and character development usually found in much longer series, such as *Mobile Suit Gundam* . Anybody who has seen the *Babylon 5* series might find *Crest Of The Stars* a little familiar, if only because of its atmosphere and the way it deals with character development, technology, etc. And the opening music and animation are rather unique in view of the other recent anime we have seen. The DVD does not feature much extra stuff, but the sheer quality of the series is definitely worth your money... A second series, titled *War Flag Of The Star* (*Seikai No Senki* . See Anime Story In PA #64), was released not long after the first series and should be available here soon. See our *Crest Of The Stars* Anime Story in PA#59: pg. 64 and Spotlight Article in PA #64: pg. 28-30.

Bandai, Cat. #0680V, Bilingual DVD, 100 min., $29.98, 13+

| Designs: | **4** | Animation: | **4** | Soundtrack: | **3.5** | Story: | **4** | Translation: | **3.5** | Average: | **3.5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## JUNGLE DE IKOU! (VHS) ★★★☆

If you liked *Neo-Ranga*, prepare yourself for a shock: not everybody reacts sanely when a South seas' evil God makes its grand entry in the life of a teenage girl who is definitely NOT ready for such a huge responsibility. Especially when the diminutive evil God in question is bad tempered, horny as heck and the only way to contain him is the stupidest (and most hilarious) dance you will ever see and hear. The animation is nicely done, but what you are really looking for in here is lots of laughs and girls with HUGE breasts bouncing around in skimpy outfits. *Jungle De Ikou*! is lots of fun and doesn't take itself seriously for a second. As with *Apocalypse Zero*, we had to buy this one to review it. Rather unbelievable in this day and age, where anime magazines, such as PA, could help them promote their titles. Go figure how the mind of some people work... Anyway, we don't get any screeners from Media Blasters (AnimeWorks). Sorry about that folks! We hate to give free publicity to undeserving people, but we HAD to tell you about this one...

AnimeWorks, Cat.# AWVD-0005, Dubbed, 90 min., $24.95, 13+

| Designs: | **3.5** | Animation: | **3** | Soundtrack: | **3.5** | Story: | **3.5** | Translation: | **3.5** | Average: | **3.5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## NADIA: THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER (VHS), VOL. 1 ★★★★

This series is both one of the greatest successes of the early 1990's and the work that put GAINAX on the map of Otakuland (some will say that *Evangelion* is their most important work, but we see things a little differently: *Evangelion* was their most POPULAR work, not their most important...). Although later eclipsed by *Sailor Moon* , *Evangelion* and *Gundam Wing* , *Nadia* (also known as *The Secret Of Blue Water* ) dominated the very early 1990's with its endearing characters and bewildering mix of 19th Century technology, wild adventure (it is a retelling of Jules Vernes' 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea ) and science-fiction. With the addition of some humor and a lot of drama, you had one heck of a good series. No wonder the little black mouse thought *Nadia* would be a good basis for its latest movie... This is a masterpiece you should definitely see, even if it does not have any snazzy computer graphics or Babes In Battle Armor...

A.D. Vision, Cat. #NS-001D/ DVDNS-001, Dubbed VHS/ Bilingual DVD, 100 min., $19.98/$29.98, 13+.

| Designs: | **4.5** | Animation: | **3.5** | Soundtrack: | **4** | Story: | **4** | Translation: | **3.5** | Average: | **4** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Ratings' Legend: 0 = Pathetic / 1 = Poor / 2 = Fair / 2.5 = Average / 3 = Good / 3.5 = Very Good / 4 = Excellent / 5 = Outstanding

Kinsey Beasley Bardell (Order - 53033488)

## 8TH MAN / TOBOR, THE 8TH MAN (VHS), VOL. 1-4

Formerly released as *The Greatest Adventures of 8th Man* under the label Video Rarities (1990), this collection of 20 episodes of *8-Man* is now made available again by The Right Stuf. Adapted from writer Hirai Kazumasa and artist Kuwata Jiro's manga in 1963, the original anime series had fifty-six episodes. In 1965, ABC Films adapted 52 episodes in English for North American television. After Saucer Lips killed Peter Brady, the slain police officer was found by Professor Genius, who transformed him into Tobor, an atomic-powered crimefighter! Of course, the animation is in black & white, limited, re-edited, and the character's names were changed, but this is a great classic that everyone should see at least once in their life! It is funny and enjoyable. [CJP]

Right Stuf, Cat.# 45010-40, Dubbed, 120 min. ea., $19.98 ea. G

Designs: **2.5** Animation: **2** Soundtrack: **2** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3**

## ASSEMBLE INSERT (VHS/DVD)

If you think *Assemble Insert* somehow reminds you of *Patlabor*, this is no coincidence, because it was done by most of the same team! The story was written by Masami Yuuki, while the mecha designs were done by Yutaka Izubuchi. The character designs are bizarre (some of them don't have noses!), the story is totally wacko and the result is lots of fun. However, the animation is pretty standard. The tape and DVD contain the entire series.

Right Stuff, Cat. #RS9007 (RSDVD9008), Dubbed (Bilingual DVD), 60 min., $19.98 ($24.95), G.

Designs: **4** Animation: **3** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## DETONATOR ORGUN (VHS DUB)

With *Hades Project: Zeorymer*, Masami Obari's *Detonator Orgun* is one of my favorite mecha series ever (Michitaka Kikuchi did the character designs for both, so...). Why? Because it simply kicks butt! Mega-cool character and mecha designs, great music and an imaginative and gripping story, what more can you want? This early 1990's little OVA series' only negative aspect is its somewhat rushed ending (a fourth episode would have taken care of this problem). By the way, this adequately dubbed version is presented on one, 150-minute tape (the DVD will be available in November 2001).

USM, Cat. # USM 2058, Dubbed, 150 min., $19.99, PG (Violence, Mature Language, Brief Nudity).

Designs: **4.5** Animation: **3.5** Soundtrack: **4** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## OUTLAW STAR (DVD), VOL. 2-3

Even if we think that *Cowboy Bebop* was a much better series in every way, we must say that we still have a soft spot for *Outlaw Star*. In fact, a lot of people must have liked it, because it spawned *Angel Links*, a similar series situated in the same universe (we even see some *Angel Links* characters in *Outlaw Star*). Those two DVDs combined contain no less than 17 episodes (?!!!) and conclude the series (sorry, no comments on Vol. 1 since Bandai never sent it to us). *Outlaw Star* is by no means a masterpiece, but is still lots of fun...

Bandai, Cat. # 0822, Bilingual DVDs, 200 min. ea., $44.98 ea., PG (Violence, Mature Language).

Designs: **4** Animation: **3.5** Soundtrack: **3.5** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## AD POLICE (VHS), VOL. 1-2

Since the new *BGC 2040* series had been so successful, some people thought it would be a good idea to make a new *A.D. Police* series as well. However, the *A.D. Police* series surely did not have the impact of *BGC 2040*. The designs are bland (why AIC didn't follow *BGC 2040* 's designs is beyond us), the music is standard and the story is ordinary. Moreover, this character development series suffers from something that could be considered a major flaw: you don't care about what happens to the characters! The new *A.D. Police* could have been much better... See Anime Story in PA #64: pg. 57.

A.D. Vision, Cat. #ADVAP-001/2D, Dubbed, 100/ 75 min., $19.98, 13+.

Designs: **2.5** Animation: **3** Soundtrack: **2.5** Story: **2.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3**

## CITY HUNTER TV SERIES (VHS), VOL. 2

This is one of the 1980's famous TV series us, older fans, had been wanting to see subtitled AND commercially available for a long time. If you liked the *City Hunter* manga, the TV series will be your cup of tea. Most of the story is the same as in the manga (there is some editing to move events a little faster) and one of Ryo's "Mokori" fun moments is guaranteed in each episode (so is Kaori's legendary bad temper attacks). See previous review in PA #62: pg. 54.

ADV FanSubs, Cat. #VHSCH-001S, Subtitled, 100 min., $19.98 US (+ shipping: $4 US for USA & $6 US For Canada), PG (Violence, Partial Nudity, Mature Situations, Mature Language). For details check www.advfilms.com/advfansubs/.

Designs: **3.5** Animation: **3** Soundtrack: **3.5** Story: **4** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## HERMES: WINDS OF LOVE (VHS)

Since this is the first anime release of this company, we would have liked to give it a favorable review. However, we could not do so, simply because *Hermes: Winds Of Love* is a rather boring and unremarkable movie, featuring only average designs, animation and music. Watching it reminded us of *Legend Of Crystania*, not necessarily a good thing, trust us on this. However, we can hardly blame Vanguard for the movie's lack of spiff. After all, they are not the ones who made it... Maybe Vanguard will be luckier with their next release?... The box says "#1 Box Office Hit In Japan," but we never heard of this movie before...

Vanguard, Cat. #VF0145, Subtitled, 117 min., $29.95, PG (Violence, Brief Nudity).

Designs: **2.5** Animation: **3** Soundtrack: **2** Story: **2.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **2.5**

## VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU OVA (DVD), VOL. 1

This is one of the best OVA series of the late 1980's. Directed by Toshihiro Hirano (*Iczer One*, *Macross*), it features wonderful character designs by Narumi Kakinouchi, superb music by Kenji Kawai (*Patlabor*) and a superbly narrated story, created by Kakinouchi herself (she is the author of the original manga). If you have a certain interest for Vampire stories, you should check out what the Japanese Vampires are like... A superb OVA and a must for your DVD collection...

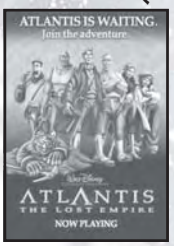
AnimEigo, Cat. #AV201070/71, Bilingual DVDs, 50/ 55 min., $24.95 ea., PG (Violence, Mature Subject).

Designs: **4.5** Animation: **3.5** Soundtrack: **4** Story: **4** Translation: **3.5** Average: **4**

Unless stated otherwise, all reviews are by Martin Ouellette.

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

## ATLANTIS (THEATRICAL)




AAH! At last! A Disney movie without a SINGLE song (exit Phil Collins and Elton John!)! Moreover, the designs and animation are superbly done (not as dynamic as *Tarzan* , but still...), the soundtrack is really nice and the story, while as classic as can be, is really entertaining. Yes, there are many similarities to *Nadia* , but they were not as deranging as I thought they would be. Some of the characters (Molière, the old radio lady, the dynamite guy, etc.) are works of art and worth the entry price all by themselves. I was impressed and so should you, even if this is done by Disney... PG (Action Violence)

Designs: **4** Animation: **4.5** Soundtrack: **3.5** Story: **3.5** Translation: **4** Average: **4**

## DINOSAUR (DVD)

Wow! Although not as incredibly well done as, let's say, *Final Fantasy* (hard to beat in any case...), *Dinosaur* is a very entertaining movie to watch. The designs of the Dinosaurs are well done, the animation excellent (good texture work and nice movements) and the story, if a tad manichean and classic, works pretty well and keeps your interest. The DVD is loaded with extras and your kids should find the whole thing quite fun. *Dinosaur* is not a masterpiece of computer animation, but it is good and honest entertainment...

Disney DVD, Cat.# 19572, English/French, 82 min., $19.99 US / $34.99 Can, G.

Designs: **4** Animation: **4** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **4**

## FINAL FANTASY (THEATRICAL)

This is a very troublesome movie. First of all, the story is very "anime", in the bad sense of the word. Too much of "Trying To Rationally Explain Stuff That Makes No Sense" in there and the "Bad Guy Only Doing What He Thinks Is Best" routine is getting a bit tedious. HOWEVER, the computer animation is FANTASTIC, especially Aki, who got more work on her animation than all the other characters combined (the hair!). And the designs, by Shuko Murase (*Gundam Wing* ) and Shinji Aramaki (*Bubblegum Crisis* ), are superb. Bottom line: The story is only so so, go see this movie for its animation, its worth it... This movie is not considered anime by many, but just a look to the staff can convince you of the contrary. It is financed by American money, but the animation staff is mostly Japanese.

Designs: **4.5** Animation: **4.5** Soundtrack: **4** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **4**

## TITAN A.E. (DVD)

*Titan A.E.* is a movie from which I expected a lot and let me down when I saw it (and I was not alone, the movie did not do well in the theaters). The designs, both character and mechanical, were nice and the animation more than adequate, but the story left me rather indifferent. And the ending is less than original and more than predictable. One of the DVD's coolest feature is the deleted and alternative scenes section. *Titan A.E.* is a good movie, but it could have been a LOT better in the story and character development section.

TC Fox, Cat.# 2000924, English/French, 95 min., $22.98 US / $34.99 Can, G.

Designs: **3.5** Animation: **4** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **2.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## CHICKEN RUN (DVD)

*Chicken Run* is as different from the futuristic computer works of *Final Fantasy* and *Schreck* as a horse is from a car. While the last two use the latest techniques, Chicken Run uses Stop-Motion, a technique that was used for movies such as the first *King Kong*. The result is something that can be considered more a work of art and a tribute to patience and meticulosity than a simple movie. The story is classical, but it is the chickens as main characters that make this movie so great. The DVD contains loads of bonus materials, so it is a VERY good buy. Have fun!

DreamWorks, Cat.# 86453, English, 84 min., $26.99 US / $25.99 Can, G.

Designs: **4.5** Animation: **4.5** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **3.5** Translation: **4** Average: **4**

## FANTASIA 2000 (DVD)

The first *Fantasia* , with its *Night On Bald Mountain* and its magical depiction of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, had fascinated us as children (and still does). However, this new *Fantasia* lacks this incredible stunning power the first had. Of all the tracks, only *Pines Of Rome* (the whales), *Carnival Of The Animals, Finale* (the flamingo with the yo-yo) and *Firebird Suite* (the forest nymph) are truly worthy of their place in *Fantasia* . The others, while nice, are rather ordinary. Three truly great pieces is way too low a number (there are eight pieces in all) to call *Fantasia 2000* a total success. The three great pieces are worth being seen though...

Disney DVD, Cat.# 19571, English/French, 74 min., $29.99 US / $34.99 Can, G.

Designs: **4** Animation: **4.5** Soundtrack: **4** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **4**

## SHREK (THEATRICAL)

I was a little let down by this movie. Oh, the animation is very well done (they really managed to make the donkey look like a stuffed toy) and some of the jokes are not bad (YOU don't KNOW how it is to be considered a FREAK!!!" pause "Well, maybe you do..."), but there was a lack of daring in there, things could have been funnier and edgier, especially with the voice acting talent involved (Eddie Murphy, John Lithgow and Mike Myers are not exactly boring actors). *Shrek* is a cool movie, but I was somewhat disappointed...

Designs: **3.5** Animation: **4** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **3.5** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

## TOY STORY 2 (DVD)

Sequels are rarely as good as their predecessor and *Toy Story 2* proves that this saying is nearly always right. Oh, it IS a lot of fun, but it lacks the feeling of discovery the first had. In fact, maybe this is what made the first *Toy Story* such a great success: people had never seen a totally CGI movie, they were curious about it and the little toys acting like people were funny. That was about it. In short, *Toy Story 2* is the same as the first, but the novelty is gone...

Disney DVD/Pixar, Cat.# 22586, English/French, 95 min., $29.99 US / $28.99 Can, G.

Designs: **4** Animation: **4** Soundtrack: **3** Story: **3** Translation: **3.5** Average: **3.5**

Ratings' Legend: 0 = Pathetic / 1 = Poor / 2 = Fair / 2.5 = Average / 3 = Good / 3.5 = Very Good / 4 = Excellent / 5 = Outstanding

Kirsty Beasley Bardell (Order: 53033483)

## BLUE SUBMARINE NO 6 (TOONAMI DVD)

We were agreeably surprised to see that there isn't much missing from the original version. Only a few scenes containing too much nudity or violence were edited. We still would not recommend this to younger children, but the older ones will certainly love it. A really cool series indeed, contained on one DVD! See Feature Article in PA #57: pg. 54. See Previous reviews in PA #60: pg. 57; #62: pg. 56; #63: pg. 55.

Bandai, Bilingual DVD, 100 min., $19.98, PG (Violence).

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 4.5 | Animation: | 4.5 | Soundtrack: | 4 |
| Story: | 3.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★★ |

## GUNDAM WING THE MOVIE (TOONAMI DVD)

As with *Blue Submarine* , we were quite surprised to see that this Toonami version of *Gundam Wing: The Movie* is as close as possible to the original *Endless Waltz* , with only very few scenes deleted. If your kids like cool giant robots, they can safely watch this beautifully made movie. A must for younger fans. See Feature Article in PA #59: pg. 36-38. See previous review in PA #64: pg. 53.

Bandai, Cat. # 1681, Bilingual DVD, 90 min., $19.98, PG (Violence).

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 4.5 | Animation: | 4 | Soundtrack: | 3.5 |
| Story: | 4 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★★ |

## MAIL ORDER MAIDEN 28 (VHS)

This softcore porn is an adaptation of U-Jin's manga *South Pole #28.* The main character, Katchan, is a total loser! The animation is about average for this genre, but if you're looking for a short and good laugh, this one offers you a comical, situational erotica. Isn't it wonderful to have a "I Dreamed of Jeannie" kind of "Dutch Wife" (inflatable doll) like this South Pole #28? (I'm sure it's a man's ultimate fantasy) A good laugh for U-Jin's fans! [MM]

Critical Mass, Cat.# CM6930, Dubbed, 40 min., $19.98, 17+

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3 | Animation: | 2.5 | Soundtrack: | 2 |
| Story: | 3.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★ |

## PATLABOR TV (VHS DUB), VOL. 1

This is another one of our favorite early 1990's mecha series. However, *Patlabor* is more of a character development series than a "mecha" series *per se.* There are giant robots (cool ones at that), but it is the characters and the world around them that is really interesting. This dubbed version is pretty nicely done, so buy!... See Feature Article In PA #42: pg. 18-30.

US Manga Corps, Cat. #USM-2068/69, Dubbed/ Bilingual DVD, 120 min. ea., $19.99/ $29.99, G.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 4 | Animation: | 3 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 4 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★☆ |

## DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE DAISY (DVD)

This series' animation is good, but the story is rather average, a little repetitive, too long, too slow and with a humor sometime awkward (Techno really abuses his friends!). However, this crazy love comedy is a great entertainment and the DVD collection is the perfect format for it. It contains all 12 episodes on two discs and for a reasonable price. See previous reviews in PA#57: 55 & #59: 60. [CJP]

Bandai, Cat.# 1310, Subtitled, 300 min., $39.98, 13+

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3 | Animation: | 3.5 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 2.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★ |

## IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLOR OVA, VOL. 1-2

If you liked the *Tylor* TV series, this OVA series, whose stories take place after the war, is a must, especially the first tape, titled "An Exceptional Episode", where Tylor puts into use his greatest talent: being totally unaware (or being TOO aware, you decide), which drives everybody around him paranoid. The scene where Dom, completely berserk with hatred (the first time ever that he loses his cool), tortures him, is a riot...

Right Stuf, Cat.# RS9221/22, Subtitled, 90 min. ea., $19.95, PG (Violence, Mature Situations, Brief Nudity).

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 4.5 | Animation: | 3.5 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 4.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★★ |

## MAISON IKKOKU (VHS), VOL. 24

In our opinion, this is Rumiko Takahashi's greatest work (it actually has a real ending!!). A bit long (69 episodes in all), but the ending is worth it. Personally, we liked the manga a little better, if only because you have the impression that things are moving a little faster. It must also be said that only two episodes per tape, at $25 US each is a little costly...

Viz, Cat. #V-MI024, Dubbed, 52 min., $24.95, G.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3.5 | Animation: | 2.5 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 4 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★☆ |

## PING PONG CLUB: LOSERS' CLUB (VHS DUB)

This is the most bizarre series we have had the (dubious) pleasure of reviewing. Every time we see it, we feel the urge to go outside and play full-contact football just to prove to ourselves that we're real men, that we have ABSOLUTELY nothing to do with the characters in this show. Outrageously funny, but also scary, because everybody knows at least one guy that will make them think about the weirdoes in this series...

Software Sculptors, Cat. # SSVD-6174, Dubbed, 100 min., $19.99, PG (Mature Situations, Mature Language, Total Weirdness)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 2 | Animation: | 3 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 4 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★☆ |

## GARAGA (VHS DUB)

This was a boring movie in its subtitled version and it is still boring in the dubbed version. Ugly designs (the apes are even more than ugly), lackluster animation and a bad story are only a few of its features. Unoriginal and lame are two words that could be used to describe it. However, if you are a fan of late 1980's stuff...

U.S. Manga Corps, Cat.# USM-2062, Dubbed, 100 min., $19.99, PG (Violence).

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 2 | Animation: | 2.5 | Soundtrack: | 2 |
| Story: | 1 | Translation: | 3 | Average: | ★★ |

## KIMBA THE WHITE LION (VHS), VOL. 11-13

Those three volumes (Eps 41-52) conclude the first season of this 1965 classic TV series based on a manga by Osamu Tezuka. The animated version was co-produced with NBC which insisted on many changes. If the animation was quite great for the time, it now looks rather average. However, the storytelling is very good. Right Stuf did a great job releasing this undedited version. A must for all ages. See preview reviews in PA#60: 55. #61: 58, #63: 55. [CJP]

Right Stuff, Cat.# RS7011-13, Dubbed, 100 min. ea., $14.99 ea. (4 eps), G

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3 | Animation: | 2.5 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 3.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★ |

## NEW CUTEY HONEY COLL. (DVD), VOL. 1-2

In this 8-episode OVA series of 1994, Go Nagai revamped his 25-episode TV series of 1973-74. If the story is quite similar to the original show (including crossover with other Go Nagai's titles), the new designs are quite good, the animation dynamic (!) and the soundtrack catchy. The DVD Collection is the perfect occasion to own the series since it includes lots of extras. See previous reviews in PA#38: 45, #40: 47, #54: 44 and #55: 55. [CJP]

ADV Films, Cat.# DC-001/2, Bilingual, 120 min. ea., $29.98 ea., 17+

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3.5 | Animation: | 3.5 | Soundtrack: | 3 |
| Story: | 3 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★☆ |

## SAKURA DIARIES (DVD), VOL. 2-4

Another of those teasing anime by U-jin, but this time with a great story. Urara is in love with her cousin Touma, who keeps failing his University entry exam (because of her!). But he loves Mieko! A school campus love story with some quite nice designs and a very good animation. More cute than steamy, but quite fun! See previous reviews in PA# 60: 56, #62: 57 and #63: 56. [CJP]

ADV Films, Cat.# DVDSM-002/4, Bilingual, 90 min. ea. (3 Eps ea.), $24.98 ea, 17+

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Designs: | 3.5 | Animation: | 3.5 | Soundtrack: | 2.5 |
| Story: | 3.5 | Translation: | 3.5 | Average: | ★★★☆ |

Ratings' Legend: 0 = Pathetic / 1 = Poor / 2 = Fair / 2.5 = Average / 3 = Good / 3.5 = Very Good / 4 = Excellent / 5 = Outstanding

Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

# AI NO AWA AWA AWAAA [*MODERN LOVE'S SILLINESS*]

**WARNING: This anime deals with Mature Subjects!** It goes without saying that Hideaki Anno, famed director and a key member of Gainax, likes to break genre moulds. After all, *Evangelion* isn't a show about giant robots, and *Karekano* isn't *Marmalade Boy*, and *Furi Kuri* isn't, well... I have no idea. Now, Anno has attempted to satisfy an under-used, under-represented genre or — more accurately — audience demographic: specifically, single women in college or working as O.L. (office ladies). Anime is traditionally targeted towards mostly male otaku or more broadly for family viewing. Gainax had decided to refute this preception and model a new series around popular manga for young women. Three stories with proven track records and written by female artists are the basis of Gainax' anthology series that focuses on women, their sex lives, work lives and other aspects of daily living.

So which titles did Anno choose to form the core of *Ai no Awa Awa Awaa*? *Ebichu Minds the House* is the *Playboy* comic strip-styled story about an eager-to-please hamster and her bacherlorette owner, and the owner's low-life boyfriend; *Here Comes Koume* is the Osaka-flavoured comedy about an office worker in a designing firm; plus *Little Women in Love*, featuring one woman trapped in the pink-collar ghetto and her life at home. Dominated by Ebichu's misadventures (2 seven minute segments versus one 3.5 minute episode each), these three very different stories form the omnibus program which aired weekly from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30, 1999 on DirecTV.

## Ebichu Minds the House

Ebichu is no ordinary hamster — that is, she's a verbally articlulate hamster, not of the electric variety. Her job is to mind the house of The Owner (we have refrained from the more accurate "Her Mistress" for fear that term may raise more than eyebrows for fans of furry animals). But Ebichu does more than housesit — she's a virtual slave to cleaning and organizing the home.

Based on the million volume selling manga created by Risa Itou and serialized in Manga Action Pizazz, *Oruchuban Ebichu* (*Ebichu Minds the House*) breaks the language barrier — not in verbal understanding, but in the level of its vulgarity. And for that reason, many had believed that Ebichu could never be animated, and for a while it indeed had been passed on; yet Gainax took the bold step to bring it to television. The stark dichotomy between the overt cuteness of the title character and the show's brazen sexuality is striking. It may seem like an odd mix, but with planning by Hideaki Anno and Gainax, they managed to faithfully recreate the seedy underbelly of life seen through the eyes of a woman, with her sexual life observed from a brutally honest perspective — realistic, even if the hamster does talk to her!

The title character, a precocious hamster with an affinity for Camembert cheese and rum-raisin ice cream, works relentlessly to satisfy her Owner — including, but not restricted to, shopping, cleaning, anything. But Ebichu's enthusiasm for her job can lead to serious consequences, such as a good boot to the head when she once cleaned the CD collection. Apparently, using soap and a fresh Brillo pad wasn't the right thing to do. Ebichu is voiced by none other than Mitsuishi Kotono, Misato of *Evangelion* fame, and perhaps better known as Sailor Moon. Ms. Kotono continues to expand her repertoire by resisting to be typecast into a particular role.

Ebichu's Owner (her name is never revealed) is an O.L. living alone with her pet. At the ripe old age of 25 she is at the cusp of spinsterhood (according to Japanese tradition) and for some reason, she desperately wants to be married even if its to her good for nothing boyfriend. Her affection for her cucumber-green vibrator makes that two unhealthy relationships. Owner is voiced by Tomizawa Michie who played Sailor Mars. This brings back the acrimonious banter she once played off Kotono, both in their guises as Sailor Senshi. Observe how the two voice actors play off each other. Watch, listen and learn! The Owner's boyfriend also remains nameless — to protect the guilty? — and is only referred to by Ebichu as Kaishonachi (useless) which, coincidently is the nickname my wife gave me. A pervert, liar, greedy, a mental and emotional halfwit who flirts and cheats; a "quick leak" that breaks timing records that would allow Ultraman a quick ciggie before his time limit was used up; throw in Kaishonachi's preferred sexual position as espoused by Snoop Doggy Dog, and you have a man who makes Hugh Grant's character in *Bridget Jones's Diary* a real keeper. The boyfriend, voiced by Seki Tomokazu who played Touji in *Evangelion*, renews a relationship similar to the one shared by he and Kotono in that earlier series.

A cultural note: hamsters have been all the rage in Japan for years now because of the 90s trend of single people keeping a pet in their tiny bachelor apartments — in contrast to the tiny family apartments, now that more and more people are leading independent lives — and this show is a reflection of this phenomenom. And

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# AI NO AWA AWA AWAAA (Continued)

speaking of hamsters, the opening theme is performed by the diminutive rodent herself, with lyrics by *Ebichu* creator Itoo Risa. [KD]

## Here Comes Koume

*Here Comes Koume* (*Koumechan ga iku*), created by Mitsue Aoki and published by Takeshobo in *Manga Club*, is a comic strip describing a typical O.L. story. Koume, voiced by Wakana Yamazaki (Meiko in Marmalade Boy; Ran, *Detective Conan*) works as a designer at the Caramel Ribbon Co. in Osaka, under her gay boss (Is this a cliche? A fashion designer? Gay?) and with her co-workers, including Kimi (voiced by Yuri Amano; Moemi in *Video Girl Ai*) and Nakatani. One time, Koume went to an Izakaya, which is a Japanese-styled bar with her friend who complained to Koume about her bad work situation: serving tea for her boss, for example. She needed a "real" job. On the other hand, Koume never has the same problem, because her boss likes secretarial tasks and is more than willing to do them. But she has other pressures on her job and she knows that she is, in fact, a lousy designer; she'd rather be an assistant.

At her office, Nakatani is lovesick for a high school girl he regularily spots on the subway. Does he worry about going to jail? No, but he is too shy to approach her. Some people say women are stronger than men and even in Japan there is no exception. Koume and Kimi (who was a one-time member of a girl gang) are powerful, heavy drinkers and have strong opinions. The contrast between the men and women in this series is quite amusing. Moreover you will know various aspects of Japanese culture — such as Hanami, holding a party under the blossoming cherry trees — and more specifically about the Kansai area, including its humour and Osaka-ben, the accent unique to that area. All the voice actors are from Osaka, ensuring authenticity. In a strange twist, Kouji Ishii, who plays the effeminate boss, was also the voice for machoman Condor Joe in *Gatchaman 94*! I used to read a lot of four-paneled manga while commuting; and like most of those comic strips, *Koume ga Iku* is encouraging, stress relieving... and fun! [AD]

## Little Women in Love

Don't expect a sappy story or something starring Wynona Ryder. *Little Women in Love* (the English title for *Ai no Wakakusayama Monogotari*) isn't related to *Little Women* or even "Love" at all; it is a Japanese sitcom similar to *My Neigbours The Yamadas*. Wakakusayama is located outside Nara City, which is famous in Japan for its old town. As old people who live in small towns tend to be conservative, the mother in this story is quite concerned that her daughters are still single. On the other hand, the elder daughter Shizuka does not mind whether or not some of her friends get married. Shizuka (voiced by Yayoi Jinuuji in her debut role) is always going her own way, like her father, and is a compulsive neat freak. Ikumi (Kae Araki; Miaka in *Fushigi Yuugi*) is the younger sister in university with a boyfriend.

The conflict between the mother and the daughter, or between the mother and the father (who feels overwhelmed by the high level of estrogen in this household) is described humorously by creator Reiko Terashima. She makes a lot of cultural references: karaoke, the wedding gift, bath time, and Valentine's Day. Did you know that Japanese women give men chocolates on Valentine's Day? Though this story lacks drama, after you watch it you'll feel like homestaying with a Japanese family. Or it will at least return you to the days when sitcoms were heartwarming lessons in life, rather than nasty and filled with expletives and sexual innuendo to shock the viewer. [AD]

Sharp-eyed Gainax aficionados may notice that the eyecatch (the little blurb shown between segments) features the character Kaiketsu Nootenki. Though actually not appearing in any other part of the program, she is the star of an early production of Daicon Films, the predecessor to Gainax.

Pioneer LDC began releasing the 12 episode series in late '99, in three major formats: VHS, DVD and LD. Each DVD has three episodes. *Modern Love's Silliness* uniqueness derives solely from *Ebichu*, since the other two are minor (length-wise) and are otherwise basic stories. But *Ebichu* is something else. It's different from the fact that life is seen from the eye of a lowly hamster, and her comments on human behaviour. If you have a rodent or any pet for that matter, you may want to think twice before letting it in to your bedroom. To butcher a quote from a Canadian Prime Minister: The hamster has no place in the bedrooms of the nation. After seeing how this show reduces life to its primal basics, you'll never see sex the same way again.

| Designs: | **4** | Animation: | **3** | Soundtrack: | **2** | Story: | **3** | Translation: | — | Average: | **3** |
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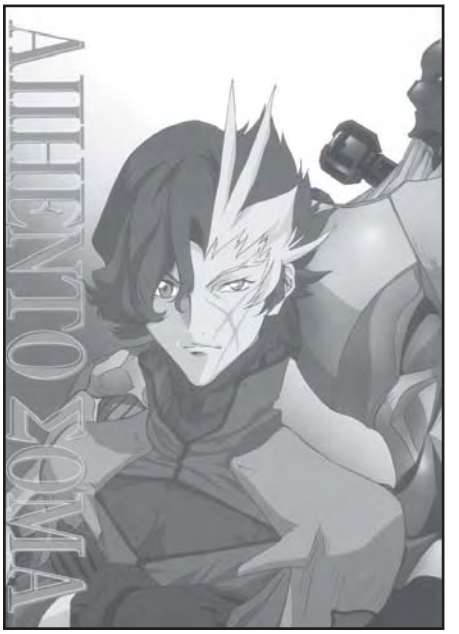
# ARGENTO SOMA: OVERVIEW




This 25-episode anime TV series from Studio Sunrise (*Gundam*) was aired from October 5th, 2000 to March 29th, 2001 (at 1:15 am on Thursdays) on TV-Tokyo. After I started watching the series, I noticed it was a hardcore science fiction story with lots of mecha (like many of Sunrise's work), but deep down it's the tragic story of fate for all the characters in the show. Director Kazuyoshi Katayama (famous for his work on *The Big O*, *Those Who Hunt Elves* and *Giant Robo*) seems to be enjoying his presentation of this more "adult" story (the main character is a young man, not a boy) made possible by its targeted midnight viewing audience. If you're looking for a series with deep emotions, *Argento Soma* offers you a "revenge" story. Generally, robot anime (like *Evangelion* and many of the *Gundam* shows) brings viewers into the heads of teenage boys as they struggle to grow, but *Argento Soma* is the tale of Takt Kaneshiro who has to deal with his feelings of hate and revenge!

*Argento* means "silver" in Italian and *Soma* means "body" in Greek. The "silver body" symbolizes the metallic body of the mecha. Suddenly in the year 2059, aliens from the stars arrive and mankind is in grave danger. The alien bodies are composed of metal, and yet it is alive (how can this metallic material be living?). The damage keeps growing because humanity can't communicate with them and no one knows what should be done. So the people created the International United Federation and its military corps that engages the aliens called Funeral (What a funny name for the corps! And their symbol is R.I.P!). The military is doing everything possible to protect the Earth from these invaders.

One day, Takt Kaneshiro, who is a university student, receives a mysterious e-mail message from his gal pal Maki Agata. Takt and Maki have been seeing each other for some time, but Maki is a very quiet person who can't express her feelings openly. Maki wants Takt to come to the alien research centre organized by Dr. Ernest Noguchi. Dr. Noguchi has been trying to put an alien's remains back together, to make it live again. He calls the creature, which was called EX-1 by the military, Frank (like in *Frankenstein* – the Dr. uses electricity to revive his Prometeus!). During his experimentation, Frank revives and destroys the research centre, killing the doctor, Maki and many other people. Takt is the only survivor! From that moment on, Takt is filled with hatred and vows to take his revenge on the alien creature Frank. Meanwhile, Frank hides out in the Rocky Mountains. He meets an innocent girl named Harriet with her canine companion Walton.

There are basically two "heroes" in this story, Frank and Takt. Takt feels that Frank murdered Maki, although it was a total accident. How could the alien know how to behave under the circumstances? Frank doesn't have any intelligence (he's just patched up – but he has emotions). So what then does Takt want? He wants to destroy Frank and gain his revenge (or so he thinks). Takt is an intelligent young man, so how will he be able to sustain the overpowering emotion of hate? If Takt forgets his feelings of hate, what will happen then? The robots don't really look like metallic products though (very unique designs from the *Gundam* team).

There is a twist to this revenge tale! Takt meets Mr. X — who calls himself an angel or a devil — and with his power Takt is reborn as Liu Soma and he sneaks his way into Funeral. With his anger, hate and sadness, Takt/Soma show many emotions. Where is he heading? Heaven or hell? Come and experience Soma because you could be just like him! Highly recommended for science fiction fans who like a little more depth in their stories!

| Designs: **3.5** | Animation: **3.5** | Soundtrack: **3.5** | Story: **4** | Translation: **—** | Average: **3.5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

***Argento Soma*** © Sunrise • Victor Entertainment. For more information: http://www.sunrise-inc.co.jp/. DVD prodived by www.cdjapan.co.jp and VHS provided by Vince Wilson.

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# ARGENTO SOMA: CHARACTER FILES

**Takt Kaneshiro**: A young student majoring in metallic engineering at Universal University. After he receives an unexpected e-mail from Maki, he arrives at the Alien Research Centre ( Morgue) run by Dr. Noguchi and the military where he meets Frank. When Maki is killed by Frank's sudden revival, he becomes extremely vengeful towards this alien. It is up to him to deal with this tragedy.

**Liu Soma**: Takt's new body as given to him by Mr. X. After the accident at Morgue, he was left with a deep scar on his left cheek. He wants to show this scar to remind himself of Maki's death. He becomes a test pilot in the military and joins Funeral.

**Mr. X**: The mysterious man who reads Shakespeare and is quite hateful. The creator of Soma, he knows much more about Funeral than anyone else. He always carries a sack of fruits and vegetables. Is he allergic to other foods and has to watch his health? He also wears a cross.

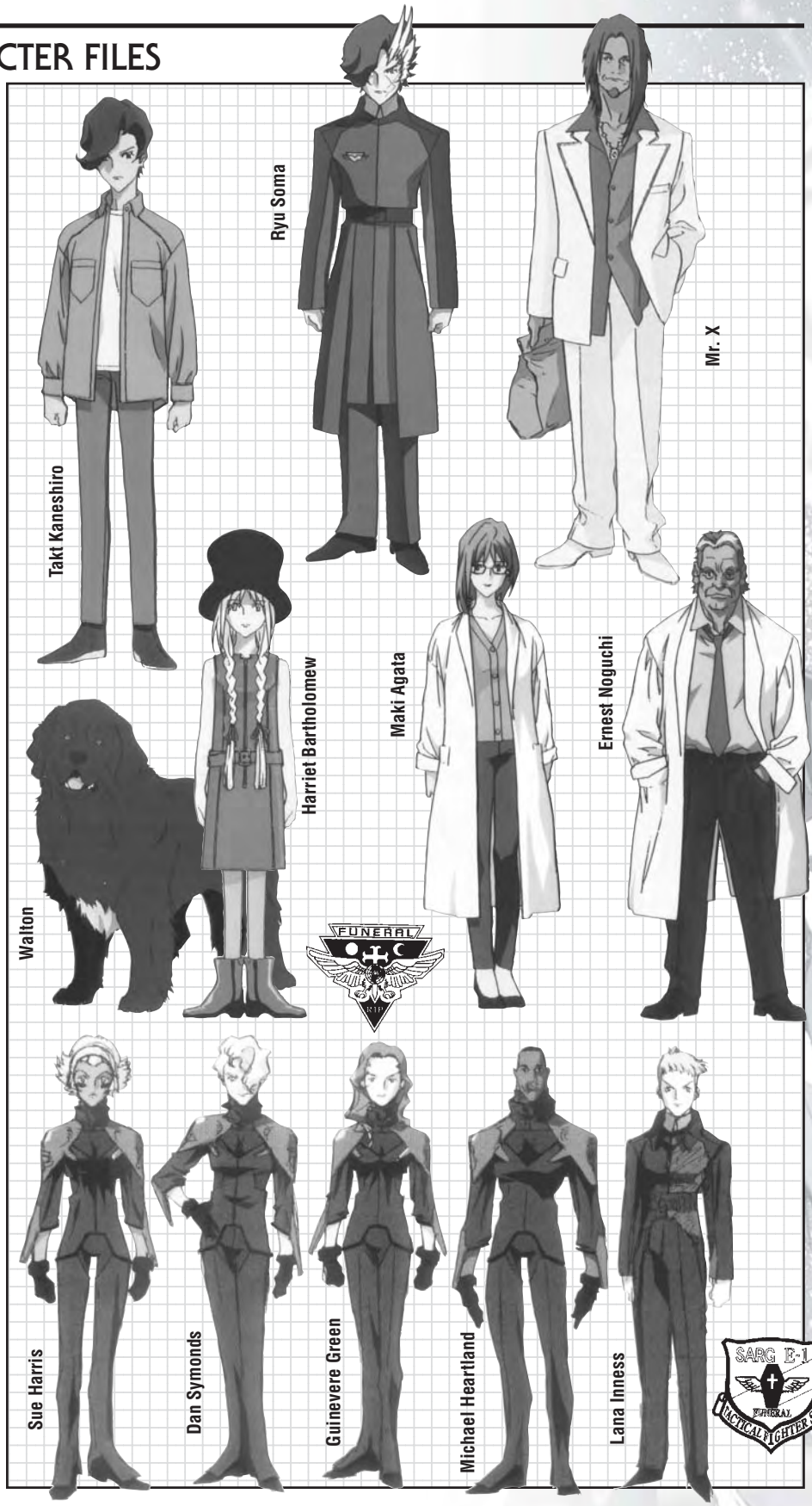
**Harriet Bartholomew**: A little girl who lost her parents when the aliens first attacked Earth five years ago. She slept for five years, so outwardly she looks thirteen, but she still acts like an eight year-old. She's the only person who is able to communicate with Frank. She lived with an old man whom she thinks is her grandfather.

**Walton**: Harriet's beloved dog, who acts as her bodyguard. Later, along with Harriet, he falls under the protection of Funeral.

**Maki Agata**: A student at Universal University and girlfriend of Takt. She respected Dr. Noguchi and his work and worked with him as his assistant. She is very quiet and doesn't communicate with Takt very well. She dies instantly during the accident reviving Frank. She wasn't a cold person; she just wasn't good at expressing her feelings to Takt.

**Dr. Noguchi**: He is the one responsible for trying to regenerate an alien's body parts and restore it to life. He was acting like a mad scientist and was killed instantly when the building collapsed.

**Funeral**: Taking place in the future of 2059, there are no borders between nations anymore and the International United Federation was born. Funeral is the military component that was set up to combat the alien menace. The members of Funeral are Lana Inness, Michael Heartland, Sue Harris and Guinevere Green.

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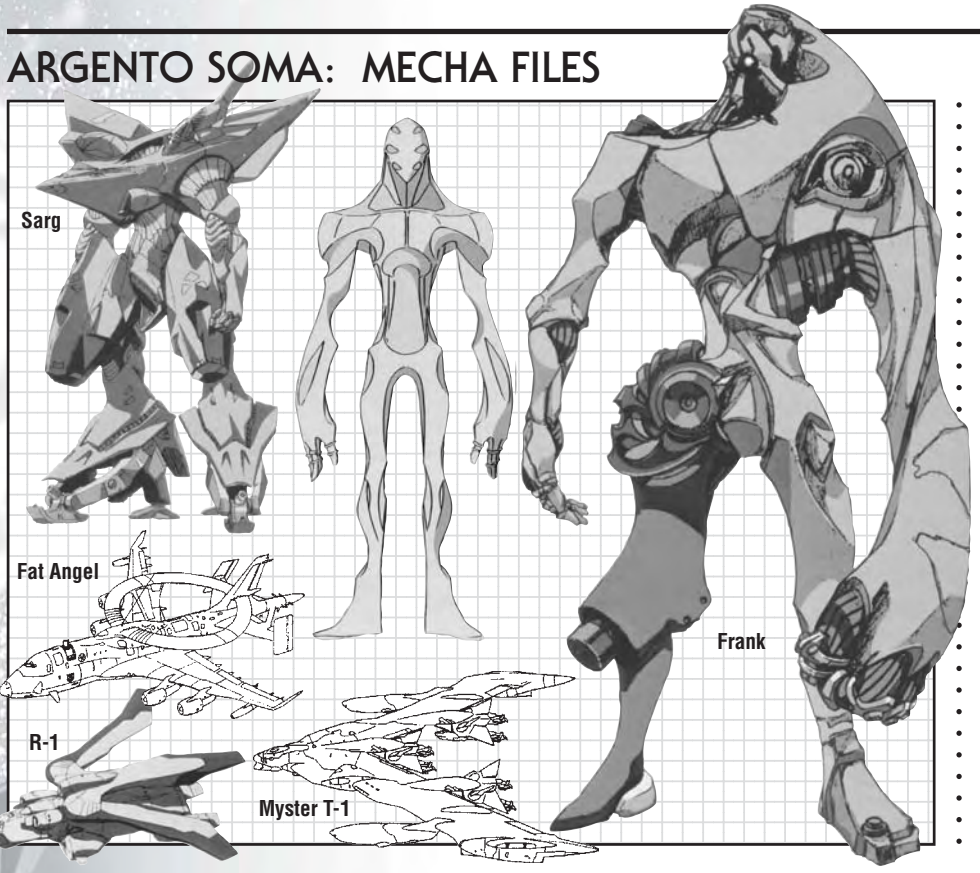
## ARGENTO SOMA: MECHA FILES




**Frank**: The so-called cyborg alien, who was created with the dead body parts of an alien. In other words, he is a patchwork creature, but he has more power than the other aliens do. Frank is stored in the storage house called Jail.

**Alien**: A mysterious creature. It arrived suddenly from space. No one knows if it is just metal or a living creature. It doesn't seem to have much intelligence. It just points at the objets it wants to destroy and they melt away.

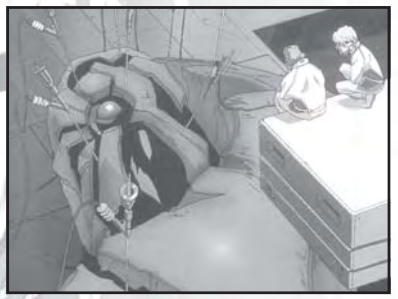
**Zark / Sarg**: A robot developed by humanity to fight against the invaders. Funeral members have not been completely informed regarding Zark. Soma rides this machine. Basically it's a transforming high-powered weapon. Zark has a rifle.

**R-1**: A military plane that is often used as a transport. It contains machine-gun missiles and a transporting passenger plane.

**Fat Angel**: The place for assault and it contains an electric particle-beam gun.

**Myster T-1**: This aircraft contains three Zarks and is prepared for attacking the aliens at any time at any place.

## ARGENTO SOMA: SYNOPSES



**Phase 01: The Rebirth and the Death**. It's 2059 and the Earth is under the threat of attack by strange, metallic aliens. University student Takt Kaneshiro receives a message from his girlfriend Maki (an assistant to Dr. Noguchi) to come to their research centre where they are trying to create a giant named Frank using the parts of dead aliens. Frank goes crazy during the experiment and destroys the centre, leaving Takt as the only survivor.

**Phase 02: The Death and the Girl**. Little girl Harriet, who lives in the Rocky Mountains in the USA with an old man she calls grandpa, is in the forest where she befriends Frank who was hiding there. They become friends, but another alien arrives!

**Phase 03: The Girl and the Encounter**. Frank and Harriet keep escaping and eventually arrive in the city where Takt is in the hospital. Takt is shocked to see Harriet because she is the spitting image of Maki, the girl he loved.

**Phase 04: The Encounter and the Hate**. The people in Funeral are doing everything possible to minimize the damage caused by the aliens when a new soldier Liu Soma arrives. Who is he? And what is his purpose?

**Phase 05: The Hate and the Dispute**. Aliens appear in the city of New York. Liu Soma comes up with a plan for using Frank to fight with the aliens. In order to get Frank to fight, Soma needs Harriet, so he brings her into the war zone.

**Phase 06: The Dispute and the Escape**. Harriet is made a member of Funeral because they need her ability to manipulate Frank. But Harriet and Frank flee from the military base! Why did they leave and where are they going?

**Phase 07: The Escape and the Memory**. Frank is recaptured by Funeral, and they put a nuclear warhead inside his body. When Frank encounters the alien, Funeral thinks they can blow both of them up together. The aliens appear again, but this one can flow like liquid. The commander of Funeral doesn't know what to do to cope with the chaos, so Frank is deployed to the war zone.

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# GAKKO NO KAIDAN [*The School Ghost Story*]

This 19-episode anime TV series aired from October 22nd, 2000 to March 25th, 2001 (Sundays) on Fuji TV. If you are into ghost stories, you'll encounter many ghosts here! Schools (or other places in the world) sometimes have mysterious/weird tales to tell (or unexplainable events). The stage for the phantoms in this anime is Amanogawa (the Milky Way) Elementary School. In Japan (like many countries), there are plenty of ghost stories which have been told over the years (by our siblings, parents, grandparents and ancestors) and as time passes, the stories evolve and no one knows for sure if ghosts really exist, right? Some people say that ghosts are psychic and spiritual phenomenon (i.e. if you believe and want to see them, you'd see them anyway).

This TV series offers you many ghosts that reside in the school building, but basically the story is written as a process of growing up for the main characters. Based on the novel *School Ghost Story* (published by the Kodansha KK Library Collection Series), director Noriyuki Abe (*G.T.O.* and other major Studio Pierrot works!) is presenting a very different sort of anime, not only with the intent of giving you chills but also to give you reasons why. The cute character designs were done by Masaya Ohnishi (of *Yu Yu Hakusho* [*Poltergeist Report*] fame) along with the staff from Fuji TV, SPE Visual Works and Studio Pierrot (*Kimagure Orange Road*). The opening song, "Grow Up," is hilarious and by a group called Hysteric Blue. Strange lyrics though. The ending song is a cool tune titled "Sexy, Sexy" by Cascade.

The main heroine, Satsuki, arrives at her new school in the countryside with her little brother Keiichiro in tow. Their mother has passed away due to illness. Unlike the school in Tokyo that they attended previously, this countryside elementary school is haunted by many troublesome spirits that cause problems for the students. These two make friends however, by taking care of the strange incidents involving the ghosts. This anime's story is all about "growing up", so we can interpret the ghosts as their hardships in life that they will overcome if they work together. They have three friends who help each other. One is Hajime, who likes to argue, but he's the type of person you can depend on. Leo, the otaku who likes researching physic phenomenon and taking photos of ecto-plasmic manifestations, is another dependable buddy. And the beautiful girl, Momoko, who is extremely knowledgeable about ghosts and often becomes their targe. So the main cast consists of these five characters who encounter different ghosts in every episode.

This school, Amanogawa, is comprised of two separate buildings (old and new!) and it is forbidden to enter the decrepit one (Keep out due to the hazardous incidents involving the spirit world). Unfortunately, Satsuki's black pet cat Kaaya enters this haunted old building by accident. Kaaya is very precious to Satsuki and her brother Keiichiro because after their mother passed away, they took comfort in looking after the cat. Their friends Leo and Hajime are hesitant to go inside to search for the cat, but Momoko's hat is blown into the old building as well. So they all have no choice but to enter. Once they enter, they are confronted by Kaaya who has been possessed by a phantom called Amanojaku (means a contrary, perverse cross-grained person)! Also, Satsuki's mother kept a ghost diary in which she wrote descriptions about the phenomenon and personalities of ghosts. So now, Satsuki begins to use her mother's diary to fight against these apparitions! She wants Kaaya returned to normal, so she has to release Amanojaku to heaven. In order to do so, she has to make all the ghosts go to their final and eternal rest in the other world (heaven?). So the story begins!

The concept is very much in the way of Japanese Buddhism (we say "let the ghost attain Buddhahood" which means to go to rest peacefully in heaven or in the other world). If you readers are interested in ghost stories via Buddhism, you can learn a lot from this anime! Let's enter the old school building and meet those ghosts!

| Designs: | **3** | Animation: | **3** | Soundtrack: | **3.5** | Story: | **4** | Translation: | — | Average: | **3.5** |
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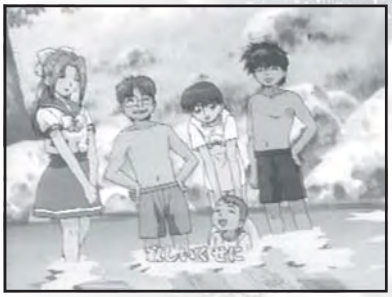

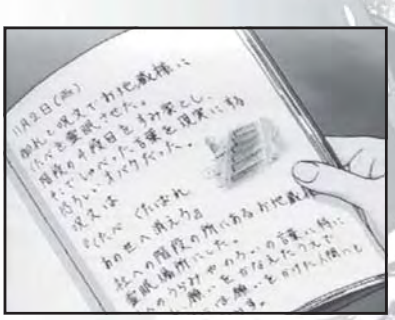

***Gakko no Kaidan*** © Fuji TV • SPE-Visual Works • Studio Pierrot. Video provided by Yui Yuasa & Nene Tamaki.

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# GENSO MADEN SAIYUKI

⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠

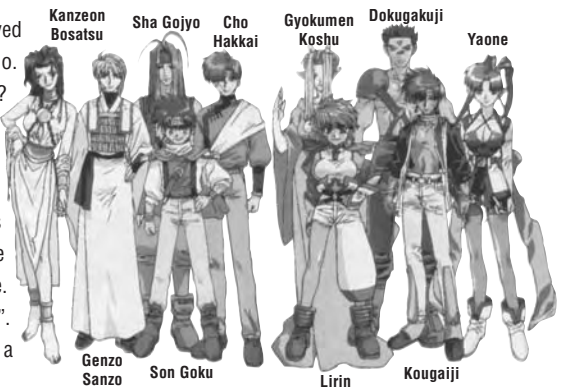
This anime is not another adaptation of the Chinese novel *The Voyage to the Occident* at all — in fact the title, *Saiyuki*, which translates in Japanese as "the most pleasurable story" is using the same kanji (Chinese characters) as the title of the novel by Wu Cheng En (which was written around 1570 during the Ming Dynasty). The complete title translates as "Illusional Magical Legend: The Most Pleasurable Story." The biggest alteration of all is that the creatures from the novel have been transformed into handsome bishonen (pretty boys) wearing today's outfits like jeans and such, and modern mecha! Some Chinese style Ming Dynasty clothing is present, but has been modernized as well as the palace architecture of the ancient Chinese capital of Shi An. You may not be surprised to hear that this anime adaptation of the manga by Kazuyo Minekura is very popular among girls in Japan (must be because of all the bishonen boy characters! — but basically they are all goblins except for the great monk Sanzo Genjo). As a note, I am not using the Chinese pronunciation of the kanji for the characters names here, so please keep in mind that the names I am using are in their Japanese form. A very high quality anime!

This 50-episode show was broadcast on TV-Tokyo from April 4th, 2000 to March 27th, 2001 (Tuesdays, 6:30-7:00pm). Directed by Yuto Date with Group Tuck and the Studio Pierrot crew (*Kimagure Orange Road* and *Tale of Genji*) along with character designs by Yuji Moriyama (*Kotetsu*). The basic storyline is the same as *Voyage to the Occident*, but original creator Kazuya Minekura added science and magic together in a mysterious world. In the world of earthly paradise (a bit like Shangri-La, in a way) called Togenkyo (means the "the homeland origin of the peach") the goblins have gone bonkers and become violent all of a sudden! They start attacking humans. The high priest (monk) named Sanzo Genjo has received an order to head West, the Country of Tenjiku, with three goblins named Son Goku, Sha Gojyo and Cho Hakkai, in order to stop the forbidden curse of the Bull Evil Devil (called Gyu Mao).

Instead of drawing actual dragons and such, Minekura mixed the designs of guns and modern vehicle like a jeep (which is supposed to be the flying clouds or dragon) with the ancient Chinese and Japanese style costumes. Another important aspect in this show is concerning the characters' past and their sins, which are the cause of all the anger and sadness in their lives, even on the enemy's side. Their main foes is Kokaiji, who is Songoku's rival because his father is the Evil Devil Gyu Mao. It is all about the love between brothers, parents and children, and yes, friendship. Basically the message of the story is that goodness will prevail over evil in the end.

But are so called "bad people" truly evil? And why are they bad or evil? What is the cause? The more the story progresses we find out why these characters behave in certain ways (a bit like a screaming from the heart). What is the originating cause of the mishaps? It's caused by Gyokumen Koshu who is the wife of Gyu Mao — in other words, she misses him. She wanted to revive Gyu Mao (for at that moment he was sealed away for the sake of goodness and the earthly paradise) and in order to achieve it, she cares for nothing or nobody! Despite her beauty, she's ultra-self-centered! Another interesting character is one of the gods Kanzeon Bosatsu who is a hermaphrodite! In heaven, there are five gods and Kanzeon Bosatsu is the symbol of self-love and mercy. This god looks like a woman in its figure, but has a male organ as well. And Sanzo received his orders from this god who helps them — Sanzo and the three goblins — with their quest from heaven.

Does God really help humanity and get involved with their battles on Earth? The answer is no. As humans, we can only help ourselves, right? The show is filled with fighting and action, but what are the causes? The characters all have their reasons due to their past, and the story offers viewers time to think that life is full of suffering. But only by ourselves can we find the solution and answers — and us alone. The characters are living in a time called "now". It's a struggle to face our hearts. Let's take a trip to the Occident with Son Goku.




| Designs: **3.5** | Animation: **3** | Soundtrack: **2.5** | Story: **2.5** | Translation: **—** | Average: **3** |
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***Genso Maden Saiyuki*** ©2000 Kazuya Minekura • Enix • Saiyuki Project • TV-Tokyo. For more information: www.pierrot.co.jp/. Video provided by Ms. Yukiyo Kawaguchi.

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# GUNDRESS

## ⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠

"Gundress" is a made up word by creator Akira Amasawa to describe beautiful heroines who dress up with guns and weapons. Mr. Amasawa is one member of the creative team Orca that produced hit novel titles in Japan like *8-Man the New generation*, and *Land Lock*. Basically *Gundress* a the hit science fiction novel which was later adapted as a radio show and then, with the cooperation of Shirow Masamune (manga artist and creator of *Ghost in the Shell*) it came out as a full feature animated movie realeased to the theatres in March '99. It's categorized as a "hard-boiled giga-punk anime" though I'm not sure what it means...

As I started watching, the storytelling is straightforward, easy to understand, and the political aspect of the story kind of reminded me of the 80s Iran Contra and American military arms deal scandal. It's like a story of the enemy within. Of course this anime is fiction so you know how it will end, but you'll feel good when justice is finally served. Beautiful anime heroines beat the rotten general of the military. Go, Ladies!

There are five good-looking Gundress heroines riding inside powered suits called Landmates (just like in *Appleseed*) and they fight for justice. The mecha look like humanoid robots (landmates were designed by Shirow himself so if you are fans of *Appleseed* and *Ghost in the Shell*, this show is a must). Directed by Katsuyoshi Tanitabe with character designs by Tetsuro Aoki and Yuki Iwai, it's a high quality film with a solid story.

The story takes place in the year 2100 in Yokohama, Japan. It's now called the Yokohama Bayside City. In this city, the mayor is murdered and the terrorist activities keep occuring. The new mayor doesn't wish to be assasinated and he needs to do something to stop this, so he hires a man named Gorman. Gorman used to be a member of the SWAT special task force. He created the private bodyguard company, Angel Arms owned by a woman boss, Takako Horaiji. She hates terrorists because her father was killed by them. The members of this group are Alissa, Yun, Marcia, Sylvia and Michelle. Alissa used to be a terrorist herself, but when she was captured, she was reformed as a member of Angel Arms. She had a lover, Jean-Luc Skinner, who raised and trained her as a terrorists. She thought that Jean-Luc died when she was captured.

In the beginning, an Arab arms dealer, Hassin, is captured by the Gundress ladies. They think he might be doing illegal arms dealings, but then he is targeted by the terrorists. As the story develops, his role will get clearer. What's more, the terrorist leader is Jean-Luc whom Alissa thought dead. In fact, he appears to work for a military general, who is in a sense the real terrorist since he would do anything to achieve his political aim through violence. We all know this kind of story takes place only in novels (right?), but it sure reminded me of the Iran/Contras Arms Scandal — and the general is like that notorious military officer Oliver North. And in this anime, the dealer Hassin is protected by the Gundress ladies against the terrorists because he knows too much and the general doesn't want him to talk to others about their deals, especially to the police and other governmental officers. Sound familiar?

As for anime fans who love watching mechas and fight scenes, you won't be disapointed in seeing all those gorgeous ladies in battle — especially the karate master, Sylvia! Viewers can enjoy the action for sure, but the story is even more interesting to follow. The character & mecha designs don't look original, because they are a mix from all Shirow universes (*Appleseed, Dominion*, *Ghost In The Shell,* etc. — and sometime other shows like *Patlabor* or *Bubblegum Crisis*!), but it is pure Shirow! I kind of liked that robot guard dog Cerberos (Alissa saves him in a touching scene). Well, let's visit AD 2100 in Yokohama Bayside City!

| Designs: | **3.5** | Animation: | **3** | Soundtrack: | **3** | Story: | **4** | Translation: | **—** | Average: | **3.5** |
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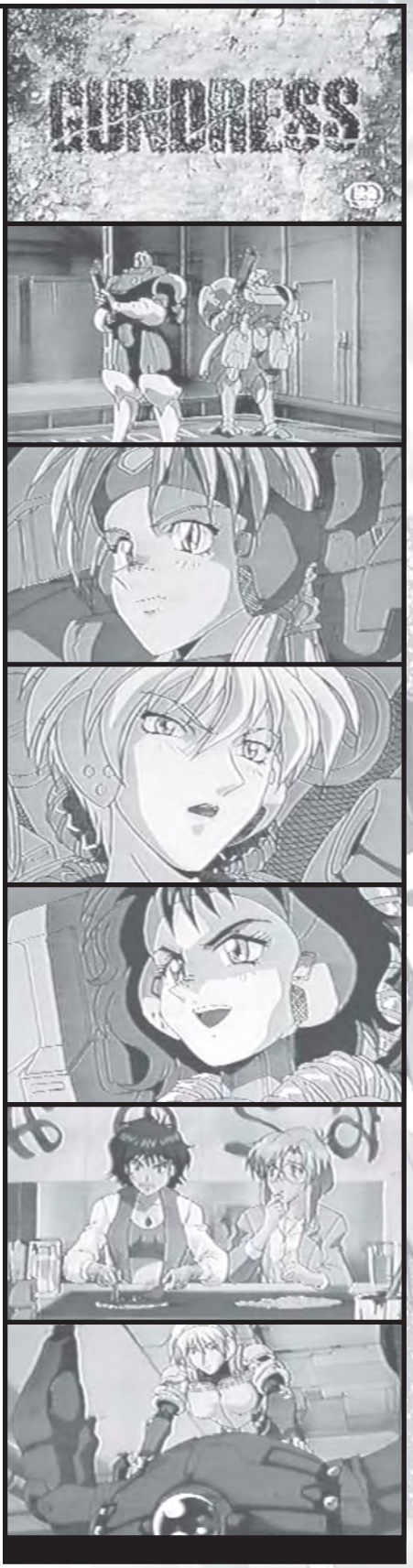
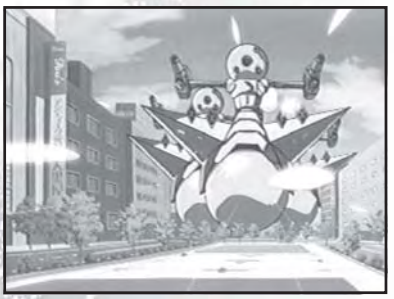
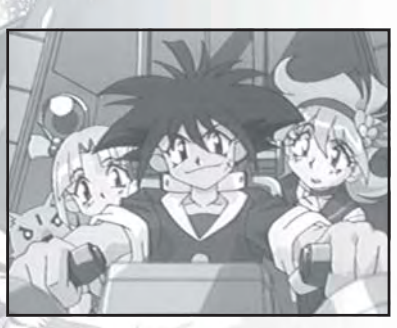


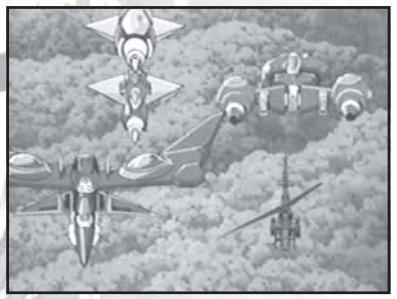

***Gundress*** © 1999 Akira Amasawa • Orca / Gundress Production Committee. Video provided by Vince Wilson.

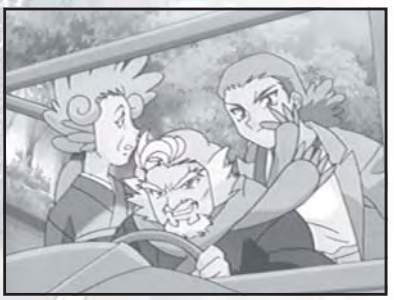
Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033488)

# TRI ZENON: THE INVINCIBLE KING









If you are a superhero-robot anime fan, *Tri Zenon the Invincibkle King* can offer you the very basics of anime – the almost traditional (retro) style from the 70s – robots! This show is like a revival of robots from past shows with fast-paced action battles between humans and space aliens. This 22-episode series aired from Oct. 14th, 2000 to March 24th, 2001 on TBS TV (5:30pm Saturdays). If you're a fan of Japanese idol singer/voice actress Megumi Hayashibara (*Video Girl Ai*, *Lina Inverse*, countless slew of others) you can enjoy her singing the theme song and voice acting for the character Kana.

As space aliens are after the Earth for colonization, the mysterious enemy corps – Zeno-Palace – suddenly declares war on Japan! Zeno-Palace is the messenger from Space and those aliens have much superior science and technology than the Earthlings. So how can humans save their Earth? 300 years prior, during the Edo era, there were three robots which landed on Earth: Tri Zenon, Arma Zenon and Gaia Zenon. They are the only robots that can save the Earth from the invaders. Two families, the Kamui's and the Uryuu's and a dog named Gon are forced to ride a battleship, Shinonome (Cloud of the East), which they had inherited from their ancestors. Akira Kamui, the main character, becomes the pilot of Ten (heaven), one of the three modules of Tri-Zenon. Akira is a typical idiot who really can't think and is a very hot-blooded and extremely simple-minded. As well, from the very beginning he and his childhood gal-pal, Kana Uryuu, continue arguing and fighting — as if they enjoy screaming at each other. You'll begin to feel sorry for the supposed enemy who is beaten mercilessly. But basically it's a bit like an American sitcom with loud mouthed characters who constantly fight amonst themselves (A home comedy with giant robots? Can you imagine "Married... with Aliens"? "Akira in the Middle"? "Everybody Loves Mecha"?) And boy do they scream! Parents of those kids themsleves are also idiots. It's a comedy so all we have to do is sit and watch their sheer stupidity. The mysterious enemy Zeno-Palace demands the Japanese government to give the inheritence and the family (i.e. the Kamui family with the battleship Shinonome and Tri-Zenon). But of course the members of those two idiotic familes don't understand the value or signifiagance of Tri-Zenon at all. And everytime the enemy shows up they somehow chase it away with their stupid act. Perhaps the Kamiya family is that appalling? Is the power of family love strong enough to chase them away? This anime brings in many families in fact, and there are two other minor families, the Makinohara's and the Munakata's, plus their friends.

As the story progresses, two other battleships appear: Akebono (The dawn), and Akatsuki (Daybreak). They're originally from Zeno-Palace. The people of Zeno-Palace had to leave their mother planet due to an extraordinary phenomenon or convulsion of nature. At first, they were democratic, but as time went by with different leaders, their system had corrupted into a militaristic dictatorship. Then some people stood up to create a faction of peace for more democratic government and sent those three battleships here to confront the dictatorship. The humans consequently have no choice but to face the Zeno-Palace army! In the 17th century, when the battleships arrived, each one were found by a different family. Now, those three families' decendants, they DNA being reckonized by the ships, are the only one capable to battle ZenoPalace. There is lots of action, but basically this anime is a sitcom filled with the actions of those crazed families, so please don't take things too seriously. Guess who is the captain of Shinonome? The pet shiba-dog Gon! Is he really a dog? He must be smarter than those idiot humans he's stuck with. All the characters are a few fries short of a happy meal; we can hardly call them heroes. So lets' enjoy this giant robot comedy, and the three flying aircrafts that unite to make Tri-Zenon. Can Tri-Zenon truly be invincible?

| Designs: | 3 | Animation: | 3.5 | Soundtrack: | 2.5 | Story: | 3.5 | Translation: | — | Average: | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

***Tri Zenon*** © Rui Araizumi • Ganjis / PJ Tri-Zenon. Video provided by Michael Liu. Web: Tri-zenon.lycos.co.jp/

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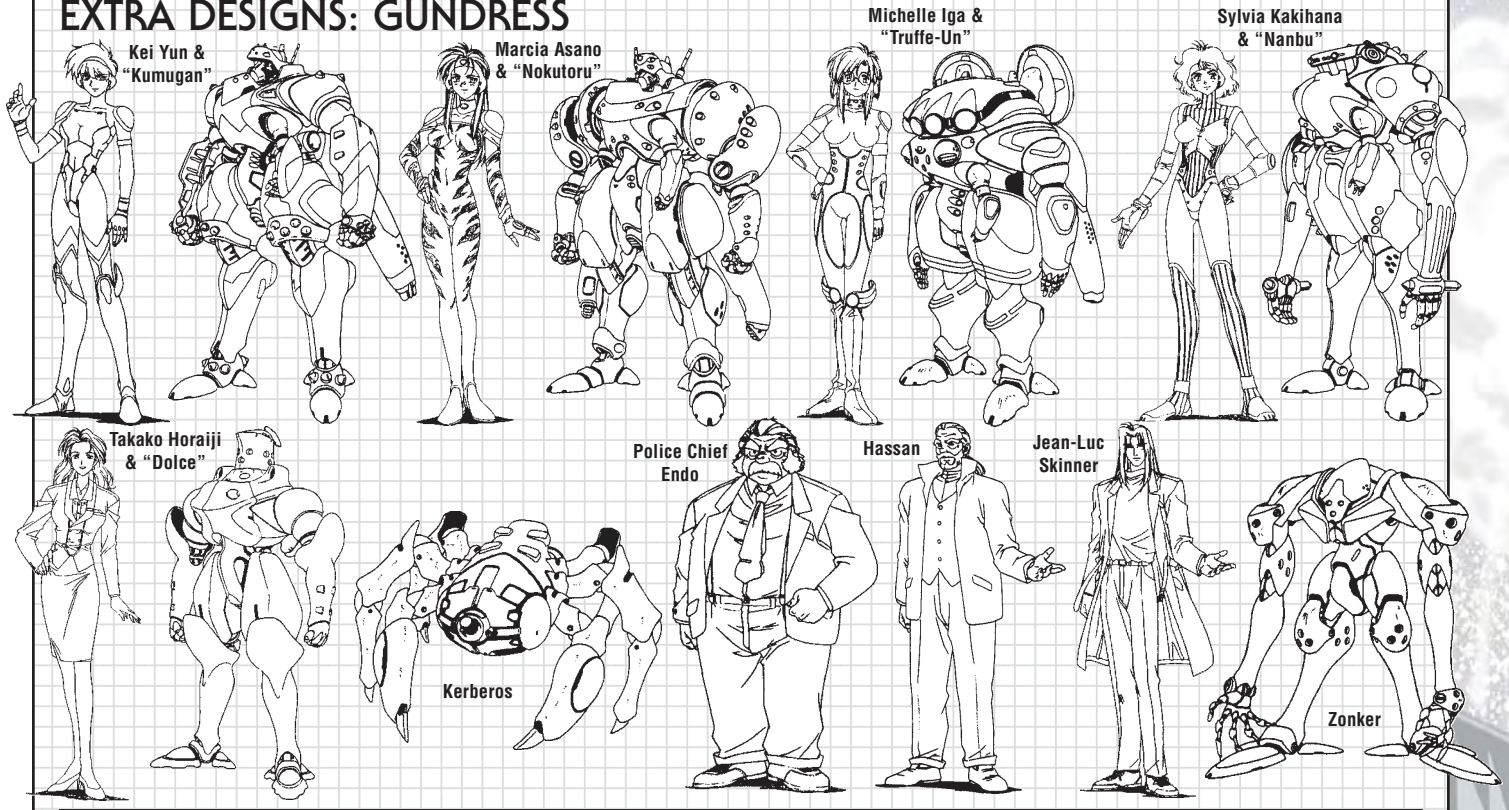
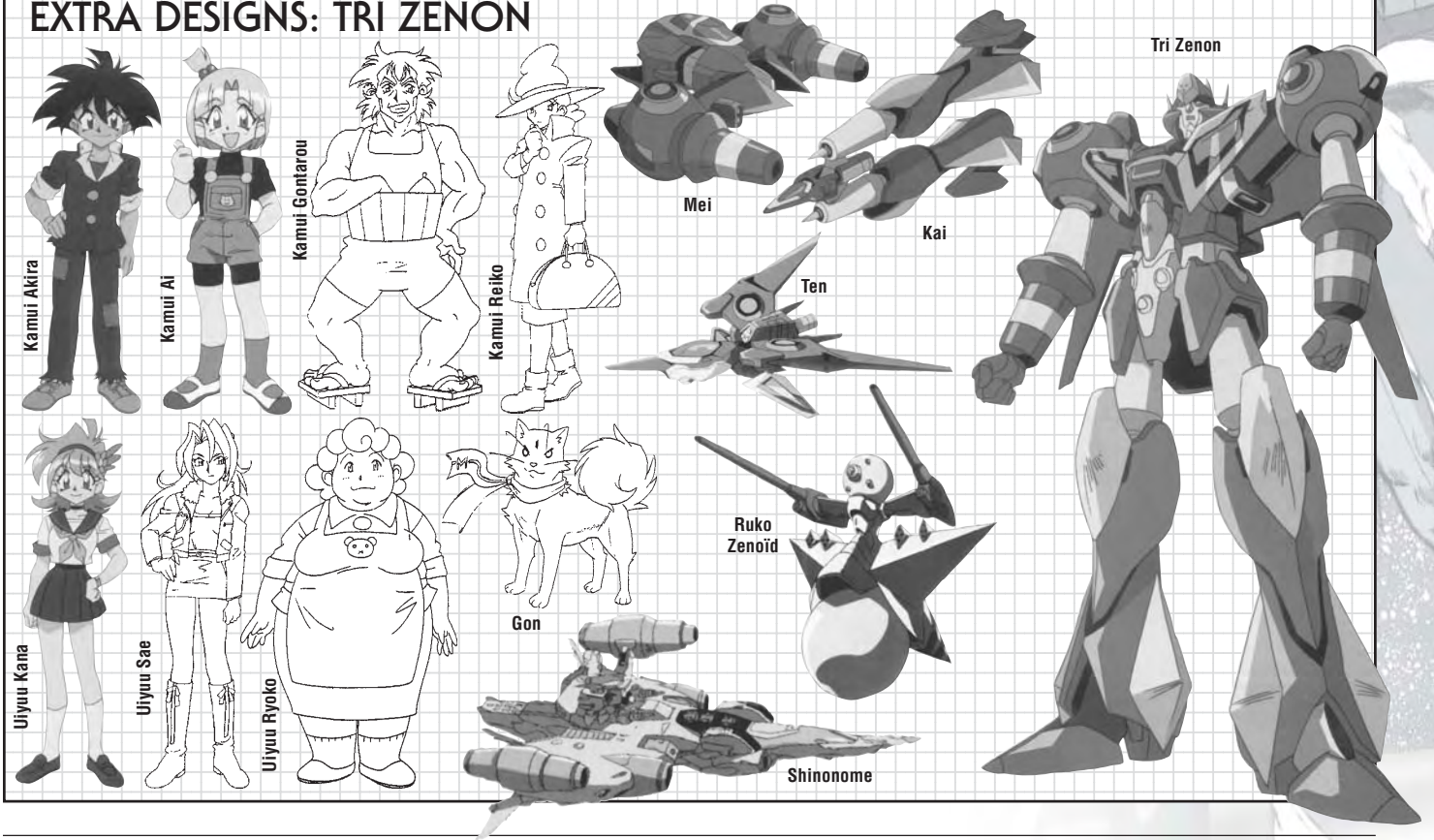
## EXTRA DESIGNS: GUNDRESS




## EXTRA DESIGNS: TRI ZENON




Kieryn Breslow-Bardell (Order # 53033483)

# VANDREAD: OVERVIEW

⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠

After the end of *Gatekeepers*, which we introduced in PA#64, Studio Gonzo unleashed yet another series called *Vandread* to satiate the endless hunger of science fiction fans. If you think *Gatekeepers* was great, *Vandread* is one notch better. This studio never ceases to get better and better, showcasing their knack for hi-tech mecha. With a total of 13 episodes, *Vandread* ran from October 3rd 2000 to Dec 19th, Tuesdays on Wowow-TV.

To tell the truth, despite the inclusion of space mecha and other standard sci-fi elements, this show has an overt sexuality with its strong theme of "How can we love and live the way we like?" Because all the characters who appear in this series lack "something" to be decent human beings. It's as if they are broken and something is wrong with them; they don't know how to give and receive love. Then as the story progresses, they change little by little. In a way, *Vandread* is a story of youth and romance. And to further add to the theme, Hibiki's Ban-Gata (barbarian style) mecha combines with the girls' mecha to tranform into better mecha like Vandread Meia, Vandread Dita, and others — symbolizing how a man and woman must become "one" to fight together. How erotic is that? Uniting to become one (mecha, that is, in the anime) is essential in human reproduction, essential for survival of the species. I think Director Takeshi Mori wanted to make a point that we can only overcome our hardships together and we must learn how to love and cooperate. It's even more crucial that young people today become more active and lively in this digital age. Director Mori also wrote this story to encourage youths to be open with their feelings, enjoying love life during the prime of their youth, I feel. The main theme of love and sex is more subtle, but many of the details will make you chuckle.

The story starts with the episode titled "Boy Meets Girl" and right away you know where it's heading. Hibiki is working as a factory mechanic and is among the lowest ranking citizens in a nation of men called Clark. He tends to show off in front of others; he's a fop, totally. He made this impossible promise to the other workers that he'd steal the Human-shaped battle mecha Ban-Gata from the newly built battleship Ikazuchi. Unable to back down from his bravado, he is forced to sneak into the Ikazuchi during its official launching ceremony. In this space age, Clark is a planet of men and Mejel is a planet of women. They have been fighting each other, both sides hating the other's guts for a long time. Unfortunately, Hibiki is a mere factory worker and the battleship takes off before he can steal the mecha. Even if he did succeed, though, he wouldn't have a clue to operate the darn thing. Then female pirates attack Ikazuchi and the top officials of the besieged battleship decide to kamikaze, blowing themselves up in a suicide attack. It's Pearl Harbour all over again. The officials even resemble that evil Japanese army from WWII, commmanded by a General Tojo lookalike. However, they evacuate to save their own hides. Suddenly, Ikazuchi's mysterious power source "plasma" prevents the launch of the giant misssile; instead, this Plasma makes the female mechas unite with Ikazuchi to create the ship Nirvana.

Hibiki meanwhile is shocked, like most otaku, to see females for the first time in his life. In the past, both men and women were immigrants from Earth, but due to misunderstandings, they became enemies. It's almost as if the entire human race had a divorce. Since then, Hibiki and the girl pirates are third generation and have no connection to Earth. Men try to use the Ikazuchi battleship and the Ban-Gata human mecha to wipe out the all-female planet, Mejel, but they encounter an enigmatic foe from beyond space. Now they have to fight together for their own existence. So who are these unknown predators that threaten all humans? Ironically, as reveilled in epsiode 12, it turns out that their "enemy" is in fact from their planet of origin, Earth, because the people who remain there need spare body parts. This rather twisted chain of events doesn't conclude in the thirteenth and final episode; Studio Gonzo and Director Mori are already hard at work on Vandread 2. For a TV anime show, it has an amazing quality. Highly recommended for Sci-fi afficiandos.

| Designs: | 4 | Animation: | 4 | Soundtrack: | 3.5 | Story: | 4 | Translation: | — | Average: | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

***Vandread*** © 2000 Takeshi Mori • Gonzo / Media Factory • G.D.H.. DVD provided by www.cdjapan.co.jp & video provided by Michael Liu. For more info: www.vandread.com

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# VANDREAD: CHARACTER FILES

**HIBIKI TOKAI**: A very tiny (147cm) 16 years old, he is the lowest ranking citizen on Clark, a factory worker. He wants to show off beyond his ability. He wants to be strong, but tends to fight impulsively. Inside the female pirate ship he becomes an fighter pilot of the Ban-Gata mecha. He is fond of Dita.

**DITA LIEBELY**: 16 years old and an assistant pilot of the pirates from Mejel, she believes in the existence of UFOs, thinking men are all aliens — she calls Hibiki Mr. Alien. She's too honest and gullible enough to believe almost anything. Whenever she has free time, she looks to the sky for UFOs to escape from reality. She becomes reckless sometimes and won't think of others because she wants to do everything in her own way.

**MEIA GISBORN**: 19 years old and the chief pilot of the pirate ship, she's rather harsh on herself and rarely shows her feelings. She wants to be strong and independent. She's an excellent pilot with a very strong sense of responsibility, but she went through a cruel and harsh childhood, losing both parents; therefore, she really wants to be strong.

**BART GARSUS**: 16 years old, an officer candidate, he is the son of a very rich industrial company owner on the planet Clark. A Richie Rich, but with a policy that money talks in this world. He speaks as if he were talented, but when people need him, he is a major letdown. That is, he'll never be there because of his selfish and inutile true nature.

**DUERO McFILE**: 17 years old, he has a medical doctor certificate. He graduated as the top student at the Military Academy on the planet Clark. He's very interested in human bodies and when he sees someone injured he takes care of that person. He feels ecstacy taking care of patients, perhaps a bit abnormally. Normally a cool and quiet person, he looks to others in a prudent manner. He treads wearily and discreetly.

**MAGNO VIVAN**: 108 years old, she's the captain of Mejel's pirate ship. She's experienced and has seen almost all humanly possible. Despite looking like a nun, she is extremely strong and a threat to Clark.

**JURA BASIL ELDEN**: 20 years old and very proud, she loves to show off. She likes to chase after things, but once she gets the prize she loses interest. A bit of an empty brain.

**PYORO**: This robotic information unit acts like a human male and even loves to be around girls. When things don't go well for him, he shuts down his system to ignore the problem.

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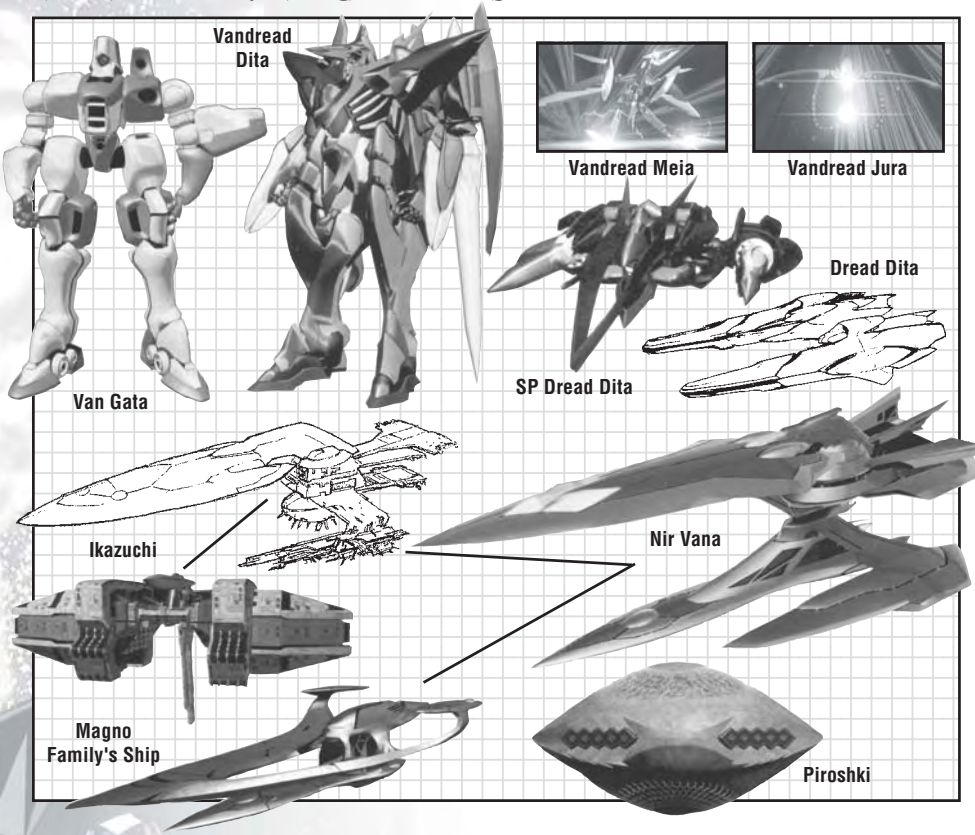
## VANDREAD: MECHA FILES




**99 STYLE VAN-GATA (BARBARIAN SHAPED) DESTROYER**: It's a humanoid-shaped weapon created by the engineers of Clark. Only the elite can ride it. It was mass-produced, therefore its design emphasized's practicality over style. There is a knife in the right side, a spear and a sword as well.

**VANDREAD DITA**: When Dita was in her subconcious state she was looking for her man as a hero and when SP Barbarian Style and SP Dread united, they formed Vandread Dita. It contains cannon guns.

**DREAD DITA**: Dita's ship and later, it transforms as Vandread Dita when it unites with SP Van Gata.

**VANDREAD MEIA**: The united form of SP Barbarian Style and SP Dread (of Meia). It looks like a bird and can reach ultra-high speeds.

**VANDREAD JURA**: The united form of SP Barbarian Style and SP Dread (of Jura) looks like a crab. With excellent protective power, it can cruise around the pirate ship as a protector.

**IKAZUCHI**: The giant space battleship as a final weapon against the women of Mejel resembles a human brain. In actuality, part of the battleship is the immigrant ship from Earth. Inside its storage, there are many Barbarian destroyers.

**PIRATE SHIP OF THE MAGNO FAMILY**: The space pirate battleship piloted by the first-generation Mejellian, Magno. Within, there are over 150 beautiful girls under her command.

**NIR VANA**: When the plasma grew, Ikazuchi's old battleship and the pirate ship unite and become Nir Vana with advanced "autodefense" systems. The main bridge is situated on the top centre.

**PIROSHKI**: The enemy mothership contains 10 laser cannons and also contains limitless propulsive force. Contains many enemy mecha.

## VANDREAD: SYNOPSES

⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠

**1. Boy Meets Girl.** Hibiki Tokai is a lowly factory labourer on Clark. He is a hothead and tells his co-workers he'd sneak aboard the Battleship Ikazuchi to steal the Ban-Gata human-shaped mecha. He's successful stowing away but the ship takes off earlier then expected, trapping him on board. To make things worse, a female pirate ship attacks! The Men of Clark decide to self-destruct the Ikazuchi. Hibiki encounters the strangest sight of all: women!

**2. And Then, I Am Bewildered**. Due to the mysterious crystal within the Ikazuchi, Hibiki and those weird creatures called women (they appear similar to men but...different) survive. This power source unites the Ikazuchi and the Mejel pirate ship, as well as transforming three Dread mecha. Only three men are left inside the pirate ship, surrounded by 150 females. Dita, one of the female pirates also thinks Hibiki is a strange creature and calls him Mr. Alien.

**3. This Is the Way I Live**. Dita's mecha became Vandread Dita after uniting with Hibiki's Ban-Gata. Together they successfully chase away their enigmatic common enemy. In order to investigate the enemy Dita and Gascogne sneak aboard the bombed battleship, but Ikazuchi's power accelerates and takes off. Hibiki has to rescue Dita and Gascogne. Now they decide to head back to the mother planet, warning people of this new enemy.

**4. I Want To Know You More**. The unknown assailant destroys the communication pod. Dread Corps. and Hibiki successfully defeat the enemy. Hibiki's head begins to swell from arrogance, so Magno the captain brings him to Gascogne. But a new enemy arrives. During the skirmish, Hibiki's mecha merges with Meja's Dread mecha to become Dread Meia. Hibiki realizes the importance of men and women working together to resolve crises and win the battle

**5. The Sweet Trap**. A strange planet pops up in front of the Nil Vana battleship. Meia is still suffering from childhood Post Tramautic Stress Disorder and cannot cope with the narrow cockpit of the Ban-Gata mecha. When everyone arrives on the planet, the desert sand—as if it had a will of its own—attacks them. Turns out this planet is a trap. Hibiki rescues Meia from danger but this only makes her angry at her own impotence.

**6. What A Wonderful World**. Meia is seriously hurt during the battle. During medical treatment she somehow recalls her past: she had parents but her happy childhood shattered when her father was involved in an accident. To her hide her trauma, she has been acting a 'perfect' person, appearing cool and strong. But Meia realizes she's weak like everyone else.

**7. Easy Life**. Dita becomes more and more fond of Hibiki, redecorating his room with a space alien theme. Hibiki hates it and his negative reaction hurts Dita's feelings. Both seem to like each other, but things never turn out the way they would like. But when the enemy re-appears Hibiki tells her, "Don't do things if you don't feel like it." Dita decides to unite with Hibiki' mecha to face the current challenge. Dita learns that forcing her attention (or affection) is no way to let love grow. And knowing is half the battle.

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